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THE RECOVERY AND RESTATEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL, IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY)

BY
LORAN D. OSBORN

CHICAGO
1903

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INTRODUCTION.

THE QUESTION STATED.

THE purpose of the following pages is to show how the gospel of Jesus has become obscured during the course of its historical development, and that it is therefore necessary to go back of this in order to recover the gospel which he taught; and further, that, inasmuch as the world's culture has radically changed during the centuries since Christianity received its first dogmatic expression, this recovered gospel needs restatement in terms of modern thought and life.

In asserting that the gospel has been obscured, no one would claim that it has ever been wholly lost. During even the darkest of the centuries it has still been a mighty power in the world. It has transformed lives and determined the destiny of nations. It has leavened society, influenced the movements of thought, and produced a civilization that is at least semi-Christian.

Yet there are good reasons for suspecting that a real obscuration has taken place. As thought is handed down from age to age it tends to become dead and stereotyped tradition. The new gen-

eration attempts to appropriate the statements of the former time, but life has moved on and the old forms of expression no longer possess vital force. Again, when Christianity entered the world, it came into an alien and unfriendly environment. In process of time it was modified by these outside influences, and lost something of its original power. Yet again, the gospel came at first in the form of life and speech. It had to be reduced to writing and brought into relation to the world's thought. Then, as it came into contact with the nations, this original literature was translated into other languages. Thus the gospel has been subject to radical transplantings as it has been transferred from the soil of Jewish life and forms of thought to that of Greek, Roman, German, and English life and culture. It has been called upon to pass out of one civilization into an entirely different one, in coming from the ancient to the modern world. It would be strange, indeed, if this long and intricate process had not affected Christianity and caused later conceptions of the gospel to depart from the original. Hence, on *a priori* grounds alone, we should expect that, after eighteen hundred years of such a history, the gospel would have become obscured.

If we turn now to the great claims that Christianity makes, and reflect upon its com-

parative failure to vindicate them, we arrive at the same conclusion. Jesus Christ came into the world to save it. It remains unsaved. He came in order that on earth God's kingdom might come and his will be done as in heaven. God's will is not done on earth, nor is his kingdom triumphant. Making all possible allowance for the magnitude of the task, and giving full recognition to what has been accomplished, still something is radically wrong, that after nearly two thousand years the claims of the gospel have been fulfilled in so small a measure. The institutional life of the world remains almost untouched organically. What is at fault? Are we mistaken in thinking that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself? Is not the gospel in reality the power of God unto salvation? There are good reasons for suspecting that the difficulty lies, at least partially, in the fact that the gospel has been obscured and misconceived, and so has led to misdirected energy on the part of God's people.

The probability of an obscuration of the gospel, suggested by the above considerations, becomes a certainty when we compare modern Christianity with the Christianity of the New Testament. The one is characterized by formalism and intellectualism, the other by freedom and spiritual power. When a man once escapes

from the persistent fiction that Protestantism, as a matter of course, is a perfect reproduction of New Testament Christianity, then the more he works his way into New Testament thought and the better he understands modern Christianity, the more clearly does he see the gulf between the two.

Moreover, as we follow back the history of Christianity we are able to discover just where and when and how this disastrous obscuration actually occurred, and in what it consists. It took place in the formative period of the first three centuries, and was a radical secularizing of the gospel. The institutional eclipse of the gospel during that time, resulting from the formation of the Catholic church, with its hierarchical priesthood and ecclesiastical salvation, is now generally recognized throughout the Protestant world. The great Reformation of the sixteenth century was directed against that error. The issue now hinges upon the question whether during the same period there occurred a theological eclipse which has persisted until the present time. Was the theological development of that formative period the legitimate unfolding of the gospel of Jesus, or did it transform the nature of that gospel by the introduction of new and incongruous elements? In the early adjustment of Christianity to contemporary thought,

accomplished in the formation of the first Christian theology, did the gospel become so identified with this theology as to be changed in essential character from a life of faith, affecting the whole nature of man, to assent to a body of philosophical knowledge, affecting chiefly his intellectual life?

In other words, stated in present terms, the question is this: What is it to be a Christian? Does it consist in, or necessarily involve, the acceptance of the traditional dogmatic theology of the church, or does it consist solely in confident trust in Christ and loyal obedience to his will? What is Christianity in its essential nature? A life of faith, or a creed? Or is it a faith plus a creed?

This problem is fundamental. The issue here is not the difficulty that one generation finds in entering into the thought of another, nor the difficulty of translating thought from one language to another. It lies deeper. It has to do, not with the outside or accidental aberrations of the gospel, but with its inner and essential nature. At the present time no other theological question can compare with this in importance. Either consciously or unconsciously it lies at the very heart of the modern theological ferment. There will be no peace, and there ought to be none, until a thorough investigation has

brought clearly to light the true nature of the gospel proclaimed by Christianity.

The answer to this question is not easily found. Our first thought would be to go directly to the written documents of the primitive period, as contained in the New Testament. But we soon discover that these also have had a history, which must be understood before their contents can be justly estimated. Moreover, they were written under definite historical conditions, which render them subject to the ordinary laws of historical and literary criticism. The records depend upon the historical events which precede them; the history itself is primary. And this history is not isolated, but is most intimately related to the whole complex environment of the times. Thus is imposed the task of reproducing the history of New Testament times, in both its narrower and its wider circles, if we would rightly interpret the New Testament records.

A further difficulty exists in the fact that we are living in the intellectual and religious atmosphere that is itself the result of the hereditary complex of ideas formed by the long course of history that separates us from the New Testament times. We see the New Testament through this atmosphere; and hence there is a strong tendency to read it in the light of its traditional

interpretation. But this is the theological interpretation, which is itself a part of the very obscuration that we are trying to locate. Later theological ideas, and new meanings acquired by words during the historical development of Christianity, are unconsciously reflected back into the Bible and attached to its language. The difficulty can be overcome only by getting outside of the traditional theological environment. Just as the scientist in his experiments makes allowance for the personal equation, so here we must reckon with this theological equation. We must work our way back to the New Testament, and learn to read it in the light of the age in which it was written.

For these reasons, therefore, to decide what original Christianity was is not so simple and direct a task as it might seem. It involves a knowledge of the New Testament that will do justice to the historical environment in which it was written, and an understanding of the history of Christianity that will make possible a just estimate of the influence of the post-biblical development.

These are the two tasks that are being accomplished, respectively, in the sciences of modern biblical exegesis and church history. The one attempts to understand the New Testament as interpreted by the canons of historical criticism;

the other, by unveiling the later development, discovers what has been added to Christianity, and when and how these additions were effected. All the work in these departments has not yet been completed, but the main conclusions are well enough established so that they can be brought to bear upon the problem of the recovery of the gospel.

While we might begin with the conclusions of either of these sciences, there is a distinct advantage in considering the historical development first. To trace the progress of Christian thought prepares the mind for a more unprejudiced consideration of its beginnings, by disclosing the allowance that must be made for what we have called the theological equation. Yet these two, the study of New Testament teaching and the consideration of its development in history, cannot be kept entirely separate. We have to begin with something. We cannot really trace the stream backward, but must start tentatively at the source, follow it down, and then, with the new knowledge gained, go back and more fully explore the sources. The first of these tasks is attempted in chaps. ii and iii, the second in chap. iv; while chap. i discusses the spirit that animates the entire modern religious movement.

The historical process described in these chapters is nowhere in a straight line. It is much

involved, and the movement is sometimes well-nigh lost in the confusing interplay of forces and the multiplicity of details. If the matter seems presented more clearly in this discussion than in the history itself, it is because the logical significance of the movement is clearer than the chronological sequence of events.

The theme of Part I is, thus, the recovery of the Christian gospel. Part II deals with the problem of the restatement of that gospel in modern language. Much confusion is avoided by keeping the two questions distinct.

The necessity for this restatement of Christianity arises from the change in the world's culture. The right to make such a restatement lies in the fact that theology is only the human science of Christianity. It should be borne in mind that a new theology does not mean a new gospel. The dogmatic statement of Christianity is extra-biblical and post-biblical. It therefore has none of the divine sanction and authority attaching to the gospel itself. Theology, having been made by men, may be remade by other men. But the case is different with the gospel. What we are contending for is the old gospel—an older gospel, indeed, than the church has had for many centuries; older than Calvin and Augustine; older than Athanasius and Origen; even as old as Jesus Christ, its divine founder. Yet we also maintain that, if

the church is to have any dogmatic expression of this gospel at all, it should be in the terms of thought of the twentieth century, rather than of the fourth or the sixteenth. One of the greatest needs of our day is the old gospel expressed in a new theology.

A few words should be said concerning the limits of the discussion undertaken in the following pages. The task that the author has set for himself is not an apologetic one. No attempt is made to prove the finality of the Christian religion To make that proof would require a book along an entirely different line. Only two things are attempted: first, the recovery of primitive Christianity by a just estimate of the nature and extent of its obscuration during the course of history, and a study of the New Testament sources; and, second, the restatement of Christianity in terms of modern thought. So far as the main argument is concerned, there is no more certainty that primitive Christianity, even after it has been recovered, is the ultimate religion than that thirteenth-century or nineteenth-century Christianity is, or even Buddhism, or Confucianism, or any other religion. The whole apologetic problem lies beyond the limits of the present discussion.

Yet it cannot be denied that the author has

everywhere assumed that the original gospel of Jesus furnishes ultimate religious reality. At first thought this might be regarded as a fault in a scientific treatment of the subject. But several considerations are available for the defense of the discussion as it stands. The first is that which has already been suggested, namely, that the assumption referred to in no way invalidates the real contention of the book — that the gospel of Jesus was obscured during its historical development, is being gradually recovered through another historical process, and should now be restated in the language of modern life. In the second place, the conviction of the finality of the gospel is a part of the gospel itself, and has been ever since the days of Jesus. Every discussion must have some starting-point. The book finds this in the gospel of Jesus, and does not attempt to go back of that. It has a right, therefore, to make the same assumption that is everywhere bound up in that gospel. Indeed, to eliminate that assumption is impossible without depotentiating the gospel, and to prove it is unnecessary, inasmuch as that is not the purpose in view. And finally, it is this very presupposition of the intrinsic value of the gospel that makes the subject worth considering at all, and that gives it special interest at the present time. That which men regard as of no value may be obscured or com-

pletely lost without causing solicitude. But the conviction of the gospel that it offers ultimate religious truth has been the cause of the whole historical process of Christianity in the world. This claim offers in itself adequate and most attractive material for an independent treatise, but the author has purposely passed it by and chosen the other subject, assuming throughout his own discussion the truth that would be the conclusion of the first—namely, that the uncorrupted gospel of Jesus furnishes ultimate religious reality.

PART I
THE RECOVERY OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER I.

THE MODERN SPIRIT AND ITS SEARCH FOR REALITY.

THE modern religious movement was not inaugurated by *a priori* probabilities respecting the obscuration of the gospel. Such considerations never would have shaken the church from its dogmatic slumber. The movement is due to the modern spirit, the *Zeitgeist* of our age, with its new historical sense and intense love of reality.

Nothing else is so characteristic of the modern world as this spirit, which, because it has found its clearest expression in the realm of natural science, we have come to call the scientific spirit. It is something new, due apparently to the emerging genius of the Germanic peoples, coming at last to maturity and awakening to activity after its long period of silent development. In the great Renaissance, that wonderful new birth of the fifteenth century, the world of thought was shaken as in the throes of a mighty travail, and brought forth this virile child. Thus in the twilight of the modern dawn a new spirit appeared which has been steadily extending its

influence, and embodying itself in a new civilization.

The distinctive peculiarity of this spirit is its determination to get at the reality of things. For centuries men had been working over and combining into new forms the material of Greek and Roman thought. Instead of going to the world itself, and to current life, for the subject-matter of science and philosophy, they inquired what the ancients thought about the world and about life. The astronomy of Ptolemy, the philosophy of Aristotle, the theology of the church Fathers — these were the things that men were studying, rather than the realities back of them. But the new spirit awoke to the consciousness that it was living in a world of its own — a world of present existences. It therefore deserted the realm of words and opinions, traditions and theories, the far-away region beyond the stars, and has been giving its attention with irresistible energy to the actual world in which it finds itself, in the hope of ascertaining what this is and what it means.

I. THE MODERN SPIRIT AND MODERN CULTURE.

In this search for reality the new spirit first turned to the study of that which was nearest and most tangible — the world of nature. Here it worked out a new body of science, in harmony with the realities disclosed. The story is too

familiar to require many words. One of the first and most significant discoveries was that in the heavens the center of the solar system is not the earth, but the sun, about which the earth and its sister-planets revolve. The whole ancient system of elaborate cycles and epicycles collapsed as the real heavens and earth appeared. Turning to the earth itself, the new temper entered a field especially congenial for its operations. The earth was found to be, not some vague and limitless plain with its four corners resting upon mysterious foundations, but a comparatively small globe of definite dimensions, which could be circumnavigated and mapped out. This discovery was a deathblow to numberless bogies and superstitions, and gave a great impetus to the growing determination to know the real world. As the work of exploration proceeded, new continents appeared, rising out of the mist and darkness that had hitherto enshrouded them. The oceans became the highway of life, and ships sailed to the remotest lands of earth in search of treasure and adventure and new homes for men. The new heavens and new earth thus discovered have become the subjects of the minutest and most painstaking investigation, as to their nature and the laws operating among their multitudinous elements. The result is the vast and intricate body of natural science which is perhaps the

most characteristic creation of the modern spirit.

But while the new movement started with nature, and became assured of the soundness of its method in natural science, it did not stop here. It entered the realm of thought, and demanded there also a return to reality. It brought philosophy back from the realm of imaginative speculation and required of it the explanation, not of the hypothetical, but of the real; not the continuation and systematization of the thinking of the past, but the interpretation of present existence. Descartes, doubting everything that could be doubted, and starting over again with present reality in his noted dictum, *cogito, ergo sum*, gave expression to the genius of the new spirit, at the very birth of modern philosophy. Beginning thus with the present reality and the conscious *ego*, there have come into existence a new philosophy and psychology which are required to remember that even here, in the most abstract of all realms, where the constant tendency is toward the unreal and visionary, the business in hand is the explanation of the real world and real life.

In the field of art and literature, likewise, this love for reality manifests itself. After long copying of the ancient models, and continued use of subjects existing only in the imagination,

modern art has returned to nature and to life for its most characteristic themes. Literature also manifests the same tendency toward realism. In writings of travel and description, we have, if not a new creation, at least a literature that is animated by an entirely different spirit from that of the ancients. The whole purpose and effort is to be faithful to what actually exists. In fiction, which certainly is a modern creation, there may seem to be an exception to this return to reality; for is not here displayed a peculiar delight in the "fictitious" and imaginative? Yet fiction has as its object the portrayal of life in a way truer to inner reality than is possible in any other form of literature. It is therefore a true child of the modern spirit; and the demand is strong today that it shall remain loyal to its mission by the faithful representation of life as it is.

Another form of modern literature deserves special attention. The new *Zeitgeist*, while at first concerned chiefly about present reality, has been forced, in the effort to explain the present, to widen its scope and undertake the study of the past. This has given birth to a new science of history, very different in character from the ancient history-writing. Employing the same scientific method used in the study of nature and of present life, and animated by the same deter-

mination to get at the true state of things, the new study has done its utmost to reproduce the life of the past by an exhaustive scrutiny of the records that have survived. As little room as possible has been left for guesswork and for traditional interpretations, while everything has been judged by comparison with the records at first hand. The result, without question, is a clearer perception of the historical continuity of life and a better understanding of present conditions. The seeds of the present were sown in the past: the fruit is better estimated because of our knowledge of the seed and the conditions of its growth. Important everywhere in the world of thought, this truth has special significance here because of its bearing upon the matter discussed in the following pages. Present-day theological and institutional Christianity did not spring full-grown from the mind of God. The understanding of the past life of Christianity, gained by the new study of history, is of inestimable value as a factor in the recovery of the gospel. This fact will become apparent as the discussion proceeds.

After its search for reality in nature by means of the physical sciences; in the realm of living beings through the biological sciences; in the sphere of thought and action through psychology, philosophy, art, and literature; and for the

reality of the past through the sciences of archæology and history—the modern spirit has now turned to the study of the corporate life of man with the same desire to know the real facts, and has given birth to sociology, the youngest of the sciences. The social relations of men, that have been left so long to the social instinct and to a limited religious sentiment, are now being investigated by the same scientific method elsewhere employed, and the facts and laws of community life are coming to light.

In the practical activities of the modern world, as well as in the search for truth, the nature of the new spirit reveals itself. Side by side with discovery has gone the utilization of the new knowledge for the enrichment of life. Geographical exploration has been followed by conquest and settlement, until nearly every habitable part of the earth is known and occupied. Discovery of the secrets of nature has been followed by the invention of mechanical contrivances for "harnessing the forces of nature" to do the world's work. Thus has been created a new world of affairs, in which the stage of activity has vastly widened, a new commerce of gigantic dimensions and influence has been built up, and new means of transportation and communication have so bound the world together that isolated life has given place to the closest

industrial, social, and national interrelation and interdependence.

In all of these directions it is evident that a new force is at work in the modern world—a spirit that has no love for *a priori* speculations, that is impatient of words and suppositions and scholastic subtleties, that will take nothing upon the authority of the past, and that is not over-reverent of the traditions of the Fathers; but rather, with unquenchable thirst and incessant zeal and severe scientific method, is giving itself to the task of discovering the realities of the universe and of life, influenced more or less in all of this by the expectation of using this new knowledge for the enrichment of human life.

The activity of this spirit has changed the world's civilization. In its search for reality in the realms of nature and life during the last four hundred years the new energy has built up a culture distinctively its own. This civilization does not merely add to the old; it supersedes it. It contains elements that often necessitate a total break with ancient culture, because they are irreconcilable with it. These instances have been hinted at already, and do not need to be given in detail. They include an entirely different theory of astronomy and of the relation of material bodies to one another, a different attitude toward the material universe, a different theory of

knowledge, a new conception of the value of life, a new interdependence between men and nations. In short, the entire world-view has changed. Much that was an integral part of ancient culture has dropped out. It is not that this culture has been argued away, nor that the present conditions have been adjusted to it, but that it has of necessity passed into oblivion as the new and independent culture has taken its place. The fundamental character of the change as a whole is well illustrated in the realm of astronomy. When once it had become established beyond reasonable doubt that the sun, and not the earth, is the center of our planetary system, and that the mutual relations of material bodies are regulated by the universal law of gravitation, then the whole body of ancient astronomical culture sank out of modern life, as a thing with which we had no more concern, except for archæological purposes. The world started *de novo* in astronomical science, and there was no attempt to combine the new culture with the old, or to reconcile the two. There was an absolute break, a radical revolution in thought. What is true in the case of astronomy is true, in general, of the ancient civilization. The modern world started afresh, and has developed a culture of its own, in harmony with its new conceptions of reality.

II. THE MODERN SPIRIT AND CHRISTIANITY.

This new culture is sometimes assigned as the cause of the modern religious movement. The changed aspect of the world's civilization is said to demand a new view of religion. And in a certain sense this is doubtless true. The modern culture has reacted upon traditional Christianity and helped the movement onward. The direct effect of the new culture, however, is manifest in the demand for the restatement of the gospel, rather than in efforts for its recovery.

The real cause of the religious movement beginning with the advent of the modern era lies back of the new culture, in the spirit that created it. The same *Zeitgeist* that, seeking reality in other departments, has built up a new body of knowledge which has changed the character of the world's culture and the current of its thought, turned at length to the realm of religion in its ceaseless search for truth, and demanded reality there also. It was not to be expected that the new spirit would leave untouched that realm of thought to which the human mind continually returns as containing, after all, the deepest and most permanent reality of life. While it manifested its true genius in choosing the world of nature as its starting-point, yet when here it had developed its method and gained confidence by undeniable successes, it was

inevitable that it should turn for yet greater conquests to the realm of religion.

When this demand for reality began to make itself felt in the province of Christianity, it found there an elaborate ecclesiastical system and a traditional theology holding undisputed sway. The Roman Catholic church had perfected its organization, and by its priests and sacraments, its confessions, penances, and indulgences, now stood between men and God, as mediator of salvation. This ecclesiastical institution was accompanied and upheld by a congenial system of doctrine which, germinating in the same soil and developing under the same conditions, had almost entirely ceased to draw its material from the original Christian sources, and indeed, by its own findings, denied the necessity of doing so. While pretending to be the authorized explication of the gospel, it had become hopelessly entangled with metaphysical speculations and traditional problems, which both rendered it incapable of doing justice to gospel truth and at the same time removed it far away from the interests of men in the actual world of affairs. This, also, had come to stand between men and God by demanding its own acceptance as a condition of salvation and of fellowship in the saving church.

Here in the realm of religion, likewise, the scientific spirit, true to its practical genius, laid

hold of that which was most tangible. It did not begin with the speculative dogmatics of the church, but attacked the ecclesiastical institution which it found blocking the way to religious reality.

This is the meaning of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was the modern reality-loving spirit grappling in a life-and-death struggle with the man-made traditional ecclesiastical system which had thrust itself in between men and God. Martin Luther was the incarnation of this spirit in its religious activity. When it spoke forth from him, however, it was quickly answered from far and near, showing that in him it had not come to a premature birth.

The Reformation succeeded in its task. It gave men immediate access to God without intervention of priest and pope, and made salvation consist primarily in right personal relations with God. It tore down the interloping mediatorial fictions of priesthood and ecclesiasticism and set men free. It did more. By opening the Bible to the people, it brought Christianity back into touch with its original sources, and prepared the way for further progress.

But, while the Lutheran Reformation accomplished so much, still it was only a partial success, for the reason that it was essentially only a prac-

tical reformation; although, parenthetically, the paradox may be ventured that this was the cause of the success that it did achieve. It contented itself with attacking the corrupt ecclesiastical organization and the false salvation that this offered, leaving generically untouched the elaborate system of ecclesiastical dogmatics. For, although the Reformation led to important modifications of theology, these affected only the practical issues that had been fought out. Indeed, the modern spirit seemed to have exhausted its energies in the struggle with the church, and left traditional theology to tighten its grip and extend its sway.

The result of the perpetuation of the old dogmatics was a new loss of religious reality. Protestantism discarded the Catholic church institution and left to theology the undisputed field, giving it a place out of all proportion to its importance, and extending its jurisdiction into regions where it has no right to rule. And so it came about that, as in the former time God must be approached through priest and sacrament, so now he was to be apprehended through an elaborate theological system, upon the acceptance of which salvation was made to depend. Words and theories and scholastic distinctions insinuated themselves between man and God as insistently as before. This was the condition of

things when the dormant modern spirit awoke again to life in the domain of religion, and began anew the search for truth. This time, as before, it attacked that which it found standing between itself and reality. But now, instead of the church institution, the obstacle was the mediæval Catholic theology, worked over into the Protestant creeds. Hence the new Reformation, in the midst of which we are now living, partakes of a theological character. The theology of religion is asked to give way to religion itself. When it is finished, if successful, it will have completed the Lutheran Reformation by supplementing the practical reforms therein achieved with a theological reconstruction that will assure the permanence of those results and give to Protestantism a theology that will do justice to its fundamental principles.

In this new task the modern spirit, still true to its genius, did not begin with the speculative theology, where the difficulty really was, but laid hold of the tangible Christian literature as contained in the Bible and the existing records of the development of Christianity in history. It has undertaken the investigation of these records with enthusiastic eagerness, determined to know the facts concerning the origin of Christianity, the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, and the history of the church since New Testament times.

This has given to the movement a historical and exegetical character, and has led to the creation of a new science of biblical interpretation, utilizing the principles of the inductive method, and a new science of church history, based upon the principles of modern historical research.

The general result of the return to the Christian sources has been, and is to be more and more, a cutting beneath the whole traditional theological development, or, perhaps better, a going back of it, to the New Testament gospel —a movement from traditional Christianity to New Testament Christianity in the search for religious reality. The new Reformation is thus an inherent necessity of the modern demand for reality in the realm of religion.

If such reality is to be found, there is a widespread conviction that it will not be in the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical institution nor in the Protestant theological systems, but rather in immediate connection with that wonderful personality that is back of church and creed alike —the historical Jesus of Nazareth whose life and teachings are recorded in the New Testament literature. We have turned from the church and the creed to the Christ. The belief is daily gaining strength that our hope of finding what we seek lies in a clearer understanding of him, a closer sympathy with him, and a more devoted loyalty to

him. Here, after much conflict and controversy not yet wholly ended, the modern spirit is coming more and more to rest in that religious reality which has so long been the goal of its earnest seeking.[1]

[1]It is here assumed that the unadulterated gospel of Jesus gives the final religious reality. To prove this lies beyond the scope of the present discussion. For a justification of the assumption see Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi.

CHAPTER II.

THE OBSCURATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE COURSE OF ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

In the history of Christian thought there are three periods of special importance: First, the period of the early church, including the first three hundred years of its existence. This was followed by several centuries that continued the tendencies already started, and that are of interest chiefly because of the systems of a few great theologians. Second, the period of the Lutheran Reformation. Third, the post-Reformation period, leading up to, and including, the present religious movement.

The first period, including the following development up to the Reformation, will be considered in the present chapter. The second and third periods will form the subject of the succeeding chapter.

I. THE EARLY TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

Doctrinally, the period of the early church is the most important in its entire history. It was in every way the formative age of Christianity, and determined the course of the whole subsequent development. Two things are of paramount

significance: first, the organization of the ecclesiastical institution; and, second, the contemporary and supplementary growth of the ecclesiastical dogmatics. The first was due chiefly to Roman initiative, the second to Greek. In both there was a radical transformation of primitive Christianity.

The departure from New Testament Christianity in the matter of church organization is now generally recognized, at least throughout the Protestant world. That was the point at issue in the Lutheran Reformation. The theological transformation, however, although it involved a still more fundamental change, was not discovered by the Reformation, and is not universally admitted even yet. But it has gradually been gaining recognition, and is without question the real issue in the new religious movement.

It will be necessary to consider these two aspects of the subject at further length.

The ecclesiastical transformation.

The development leading to the gradual organization of the Catholic church into a compact and coherent ecclesiastical body is now established with a fair degree of historical certainty. The church at first was no hard-and-fast institution. It was a free company naturally united, not by mechanical ties, but by the common possession of the Holy Spirit, and by com-

mon hopes and aims. All else was incidental to this fundamental character. In government it was simple and democratic. There was no marked distinction between clergy and laity. In each church those deemed best fitted to look after the affairs of the Christian community were chosen by their brethren to do so. Their duties were mostly confined to directing the financial affairs of the church, caring for the poor, and administering the ordinances, which as yet had no sacerdotal importance. The teaching and preaching were at first done chiefly by the apostles and by traveling evangelists and teachers. Well within New Testament times, however, the practice was instituted of selecting in each congregation men especially adapted to teach the Word, and appointing them to that task. Thus there arose a body of clergy more or less separated from the laity, yet with no sacerdotal line of distinction. The clergy were not priests, save only as all Christians are.

Gradually, however, conditions operated to bring about a new state of things.

In the first place, as the church came into contact with the sin of the world, and encountered the consequent opposition and persecution, it became more clearly differentiated as a separate body. Then, as the early spiritual fervor and inspiration waned, the importance of the

institution was magnified. The efficacy of the ordinances was emphasized in proportion to the diminution of spiritual power. Gradually salvation came to be regarded as possible only through the church and its ordinances; and thus the church came to have an entirely new significance and value.

In the next place, within the church itself a change was going on in the growth of a sacerdotal clergy. As emphasis came to be placed upon the ordinances of the church, new importance attached to their administration. The early, but not inviolable, custom according to which the clergy administered the ordinances developed into the theory that this function was their prerogative exclusively. As the ordinances acquired a wholly sacerdotal character, the clergy were transformed into a priesthood, with power to grant or deny salvation by admitting to, or excluding from, participation in the saving sacraments. The gulf between the clergy and the laity had appeared.

This movement was accelerated by the further fact that the clergy came to be regarded as the custodians of the truth. After the apostles had passed away, where was authority to be found? In the traditional apostolic teaching. But who was to decide what this was in its purity, and who was to declare its meaning authorita-

tively? Heresies arose, and varying versions of the teaching, and manifold interpretations. The church was in danger of disintegration, and the need of authoritative teaching was sorely felt. Under such circumstances the clergy gradually arrogated to themselves, or were accorded, the right of interpreting the apostolic faith. They thus became guardians of the saving truth, and the gulf between them and the laity became yet wider.

Still another factor entered into the change, in connection with the practical administration of affairs. Just as heresies appeared for lack of authoritative interpretation of truth, so irregularities, disorders, and schisms arose in the independent churches for lack of authoritative government. Democratic liberty degenerated into schismatic license. From the other side, there was a natural movement on the part of the clergy. The most capable and influential men in the church community had been chosen as elders to direct the interests of the body. As disorder and schism appeared, these men, by virtue both of office and of influence, naturally gained special prominence and importance in the effort to preserve harmony. Thus the administration of affairs gradually fell more and more into their hands. Later, when the unity, not of individual churches, but of Christendom, was under consideration, it

was from the ranks of the clergy that representatives went up to the œcumenical councils and there legislated for the universal church, respecting both the orthodox doctrine and the required conduct.

In the changes above considered appear in germ the distinctive features of the early Catholic, and its successor, the Roman Catholic, church. There is a sacerdotal ecclesiastical institution which by its teaching and ordinances mediates salvation ; while within the church itself the clergy have acquired the exclusive right to administer the saving ordinances, interpret the saving truth, and exercise the functions of government. There is a fixed gulf between the laity, who now are the supplicating recipients of the gracious favors of salvation, and the clergy, who have become a priesthood, with power to admit to, or exclude from, participation in the divine blessings. In principle the transformation of the apostolic church into the Catholic church is complete.

The keynote of the succeeding development was the contest for precedence among the clergy themselves. The terms "presbyter" or "elder," and "bishop" or "overseer," were probably used interchangeably at first,to denote the men selected to direct the affairs of the religious community. But it would seem that soon the term "bishop"

came to be applied exclusively to the president or chairman of the presbyters; he still being elected from their number, and being one of them, with no different rank or functions except such as naturally pertained to his chairmanship. By degrees, however, in the midst of the controversies and changes of the early years of Christianity, the influence of the bishops increased, until they became a separate and higher rank of clergy, claiming to be the direct successors of the apostles, and, therefore, the sole custodians of the apostolic tradition, and the possessors of apostolic authority. The contest for precedence then became limited to the bishops of the "apostolic sees." The metropolitan bishop first acquired jurisdiction over the neighboring country bishops, then the bishops of the apostolic sees gained jurisdiction throughout their respective regions. The controversy resulted in the precedence of the bishop of Rome in the West, and in the establishment of the coherent Roman Catholic hierarchical organization, with the pope at its head and Rome as the center of influence. In this later development among the clergy, however, nothing was added in principle to the condition of things noted above. This conflict accompanied the others from the first and helped them on, and then continued the development. In fact, the whole movement was one,

working itself out along these various lines toward a unified and compactly organized church.

This process was by no means simple, nor always clear. Many and complex factors were at work. The conditions were peculiar and called urgently for authority and unity; the Roman genius for organization found a fitting field for operation; and it must also be admitted that human nature played no unimportant part. It is not necessary here to enter into an analysis of these factors, nor to trace their intertwinings. Neither is it incumbent to maintain or deny the historical necessity of the movement. It is sufficient that we recognize its occurrence and the condition of things resulting. In its main outlines, few scholars now question this historical rise and development of the Catholic church in post-apostolic times.

This transformation of the New Testament church was not accomplished without a struggle. Montanism was a widespread and vigorous protest against the despiritualization of the church and the curtailment of its freedom by the substitution of a highly organized and firmly fixed ecclesiastical authority for its early democratic liberty. Although Montanism was suppressed, yet the protest was continued by individuals and isolated sects from that day until the great Reformation.

The theological transformation.

Parallel with the development of this ecclesiastical institution there was formed a kindred ecclesiastical system of dogma co-ordinate with it, involving it and involved in it. They grew up side by side in the soil of the same civilization; they naturally rest upon each other, and eventually they must stand or fall together.

This is more apparent, and perhaps also more strictly true, concerning the distinctively Roman theology of the church. It was this especially that took form in immediate connection with the ecclesiastical development above described. Indeed, the theology was the theoretical justification of that which the historical movement was working out in institutional form. Not that it was always consciously apologetic, nor that it always followed after the other. The theologians were in earnest in their convictions, and often the theory led the practical movement instead of resulting from it. Theory and historical process were organically connected.

The teaching here involved was the practical, as distinguished from the speculative, theology of the church. It had to do with the church institution and with salvation; and therefore affected the theology relating to the divine authority of the church, the organization and prerogatives of the priesthood, the character of

the sacraments, and the position and duties of the laity. This does not exhaust the Roman influence upon theology, but it includes the most significant things due to Roman initiative. The further influence of Rome can be considered better later on.

The main stream of theological development, properly so called, takes its rise, not among Roman surroundings, but from the Grecian civilization. Christian theology is the continuation of Greek philosophy, both in its fundamental characteristic, in its method and terminology, and in the subjects with which it concerns itself.

The fundamental characteristic of Greek philosophy was its emphasis of knowledge. *To know* was the only thing worth while. A more certain and more clearly articulated system of truth was what distinguished the Greek philosopher from the ordinary man. It was in this that he placed his hope, inasmuch as the possession of the true knowledge was itself salvation. When the educated Greek, with this mental temper, was attracted to Christianity he saw in it a new knowledge; and he accepted it because he regarded it as the perfect philosophy, more surely true than any other, since it was based on divine revelation. In the early days of Greek influence Christianity therefore came to be regarded as a revealed body of knowledge. This was the posi-

tion of the early Christian apologists, who were in reality philosophers defending Christianity as the perfect wisdom; and of the early theologians, who were philosophers systematizing this new body of truth. Thus the Greek emphasis of knowledge as the thing of first importance was transferred to Christianity almost at the beginning of its history.

But the Greek philosopher not only turned to the investigation and systematization of this new material with the same underlying presuppositions which he had before; he also carried over with him into Christianity the terminology and the dialectical method which had been developed in Greek philosophy. Here in the philosophical realm the meanings of words had become fixed, some of them after a long and complex course of development. When Christianity began to be thought out, and stated in terms of thought—that is, when Christian theology began to form—it naturally and necessarily expressed itself in the existing terminology. That meant that the old meaning of words attached to the new truth which they were used to express. Doubtless this meaning was in many cases more or less modified to meet the needs of the new truth, but the words never forgot their nativity; the old coloring remained, and greatly influenced the early theology. The same thing

is true of the philosophical dialectics. It entered into the discussion of Christian truth without essential change, continuing in theology the spirit and method of Greek philosophy. Thus, both by its terminology and by its forms of reasoning, philosophy had formed the mold into which the unorganized Christian material was poured. It was not strange, it was inevitable, that theology should take the form of this highly perfected receptacle of thought.

Here, then, was the Greek philosophical mind, with its firmly fixed conviction of the primary importance of knowledge as the way of salvation, with its dialectical method, and with its established terminology, giving itself to the Christian tradition regarded as a new divine philosophy made certain by revelation. It is not denied, and does not need to be denied, that the men who did this were bound to the new religion by personal evangelical faith as well. Indeed, they could not have done justice to Christianity as a philosophy if they had not been moved by it as a religion. The epoch-making significance of the thing lay just in this, that it was an attempt to express this religion, both as objective fact and subjective experience, in the terms of philosophy, and by its method. The attempt was natural and necessary. Given the mind trained, as was the Greek, to habits of reasoning

and philosophical expression, and bring into contact with it new material for thought, and it was inevitable that the effort should be made to adjust this new material to the existing knowledge. The conditions presented a new problem for philosophical solution.

The inherent necessity of this attempt was aided by outside causes which furnished the immediate occasion of the movement. The gospel was all-inclusive in offering its blessings: "whosoever" would, might receive. The church, therefore, soon included men of all kinds of mental tendency, all stages of intellectual development, and all shades of belief, united only in the common faith and the tradition upon which it rested. What was to be the criterion of the true Christian teaching? While it was imperative that the reflecting Greek mind should try to make some kind of adjustment between the Christian faith and existing culture, yet at first it was strongly felt that Christianity was a faith and not a philosophy. How far, then, could a man go in his philosophizing and still remain a Christian? The New Testament canon had not yet been formed to serve as an authoritative standard of belief, and the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament made it susceptible of any desired meaning.

In these circumstances, the same causes that

led to the ecclesiastical development which placed the authoritative interpretation of Christian truth in the keeping of the bishops led to the kindred theological development which established the "orthodox" statement of that truth. The first known expression of this kind that gained any general currency was the so-called "Apostles' Creed," of which the oldest form is the Roman Symbol, in use in the church at Rome before the middle of the second century. At first this was not at all a creed in the later sense of that term. It was probably merely an expansion of the Baptismal Confession — a statement of some of the great Christian facts, used as a confession of faith by the candidate for baptism.

Then came the determinative conflict with Gnosticism. Gnosticism was the first systematic attempt to reduce Christianity to a philosophy, dominated by the Greek conception of the paramount importance of knowledge. This effort, as we have seen, was not born in a night; the philosophic mind had already touched the problem here and there. But in Gnosticism the movement attained consciousness, and became a definite struggle. There was a deliberate attempt to transform the *pistis* into a *gnosis.*

Just as Montanism was a protest against the growing Catholic church as inconsistent with the

genius of the gospel, so there now ensued also a bitter struggle against Gnosticism, caused by the conviction that the gospel was not a system of knowledge by the acceptance of which salvation is secured. The enemies of Gnosticism literally stood for the *faith* that was once for all delivered unto the saints. But alas! they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Instead of fighting for the faith with the weapons of faith, its friends undertook its defense with the weapons of Gnosticism. They formulated a body of knowledge supposed to be in accordance with the rule of faith, and therefore "orthodox," and set this up over against the heretical system taught by the Gnostics, and overcame it. But in so doing, the very thing was accomplished in principle that Gnosticism was contending for: the idea became firmly rooted that Christianity is a system of knowledge which must be subscribed to by its adherents. *The Rule of Faith, "lex fidei," explained and expanded, was transformed from a confession that expresses existing faith into a creed that conditions the existence of faith.* An entirely new place was thus given to knowledge. In the contest with heretical Gnosticism an orthodox Gnosticism had gained a permanent place in the church. The conquered was conqueror: in orthodox Christianity the *pistis* had become a *gnosis;* and the first irrevocable step

was taken toward the identification of the gospel, the life of faith in God, with theology, the rational explication of that faith.

The principle of Gnosticism, after gaining a foothold in the church, was firmly established there by the succeeding development. The apologists defended Christianity as the new and improved philosophy, the truth of which was attested by divine revelation, and the superiority of which was manifest by a comparison with heathen philosophies. Here are discovered the beginnings of orthodox Christian dogmatics. Irenæus and Tertullian, with their contemporaries, took the philosophical conception for granted in their polemical warfare with heresies. This is true in spite of Tertullian's invectives against philosophy. No one of the early writers did more than he to emphasize in theology the Greek conception of the importance of right knowledge. His influence in this direction was so great that he may properly be regarded as the father of orthodoxy in the western church.

But that which underlay the work of apologists and polemicists came to clearest consciousness in the Alexandrian school, especially in Origen. These men undertook directly and systematically the task of reducing Christianity to a philosophy. In Origen is found in successful completion that which the Gnostics vainly at-

tempted. It is not the same system, to be sure; but that is a matter of minor importance. Christianity has become thoroughly transformed into a theological system which is generically the continuation of Greek philosophy, both in its fundamental conception of the primary importance of knowledge, in its method, in its terminology, and in its speculative spirit. Just as in the ecclesiastical development the Christian faith, which was at the first a confident and loyal trust in Jesus Christ, was displaced by faith in the church and its ordinances, so here in the theological development there occurs another displacement, and one even more radical: this Christian faith, or religious trust in Christ, has been transformed into an act of intellectual assent to a body of philosophical knowledge, disguised as Christian theology, upon the acceptance of which salvation depends.[1]

[1] If anything more than this bare outline were attempted here it would be difficult to know where to stop, the material is so abundant and complex. For details the histories of the movement must be consulted, and fortunately these now approximate agreement with reference to the facts. Two things, however, ought to be noticed, in addition to what is said in the text. In the first place, the point of attachment for the Greek speculation was the doctrine of the Logos, which gradually established itself in the creed of the church during the third century. On this point Harnack says: "The formula of the Logos, as it was almost universally understood, legitimized speculation, that is, Neoplatonic philosophy, within the creed of the church. When Christ

II. FROM ORIGEN TO THE REFORMATION.

The intervening period up to the Lutheran Reformation does not require detailed consideration in this discussion. It only developed the theological germ that had already been successfully planted in the church by Origen. During the first part of the period, through the œcumenical councils, the results of philosophical speculation in theology were crystallized into the dogmas of the Trinity and the Person of Christ, which have always constituted dogma *par excellence*. At the

was designated the incarnate Logos of God this implied a definite philosophical view of God, of creation, and of the world; and the baptismal confession became a compendium of scientific dogmatics, that is, of a system of doctrine entwined with the metaphysics of Plato and the Stoics." Christ was first identified with the Logos, and the Logos was then introduced into the inner circle of God's being. This was the line of development along which dogma gained a recognized place in the church.

The second point concerns the completion of the movement which resulted in the triumph of the dogmatic conception of Christianity. In the text this is represented as taking place in Origen. While that is true in a general way, yet it is not strictly accurate. Origen still recognized that his theology was something different from the traditional apostolic faith. He maintained only that it was the scientific exposition of that faith, for the benefit of philosophers and men of culture. The simple faith itself, as expressed in the apostolic *Regula Fidei* was enough for the great mass of ordinary Christians, and was all that they were capable of understanding. But the educated man could not be satisfied until he understood the real meaning of this faith, which consisted in the system of knowledge elaborated by Origen. In this perfect *gnosis* was the eternal and abiding truth of Christianity. It was in the Logos-christological controversies

Lateran council of 1215 the church added to these ancient dogmas those of the eucharist, baptism, and penance. These five articles formed exclusive dogma of the first order up to the council of Trent. Around dogma proper a fine-spun and complex theology was built up during the Middle Ages that practically buried it, while the energy of western Christendom was turned toward the establishment of the elaborate ecclesiastical organization and cultus of the Roman Catholic church. From the time of Augustine the period is notable, theo-

of the seventy-five years following Origen that the philosophical speculations characterizing his theology really came to be introduced into the *Regula Fidei* as an integral part. One of the first instances is found in the letter of the eastern bishops to Paul of Samosata in opposition to his Christology. They say that they desire to set forth "the faith which we received from the beginning, and possess, having been transmitted and kept in the Catholic church, proclaimed up to our day by the successors of the blessed apostles, who were both eyewitnesses and assistants of the Logos." But what they proceed to define as "the faith" is nothing other than the speculative philosophy. In addition to this, by the end of the third century even baptismal confessions containing the doctrine of the Logos began to appear in the East. Thus gradually in this section of the church, during the years from Origen to the council of Nicæa, the philosophical dogmatics of Origen, or equally philosophical modifications of his system, became inextricably fused with the "apostolic faith," and the triumph of theology over faith was complete. Owing to the less speculative temper of the West, and its interest in other phases of Christianity, this fusion of dogma and faith was not completed there until a much later date, and then largely under the influence of the Greek spirit, exerted through the œcumenical councils and the controversies growing out of them.

logically, for the systems of a few great thinkers, rather than for general intellectual activity. The church at large lived in ignorance, superstition, and worldliness, while the more earnest spirits sought to escape from the world's temptations by fleeing to the isolation of the monasteries. In the East theology continued to be of vital importance for a much longer time than in the West; yet even here it was gradually supplanted by the cultus. But, while old doctrines were turned into dogmas, and other doctrines came to the front, in neither East nor West was there anything generically new in theology during this entire period.

In the theological activity of this period, as well as in the ecclesiastical, the molding influence of the Roman mind was decisive. Attention has already been called to the fact that Roman initiative in theology was confined to the practical doctrines of the church. It was during the period now before us that the further influence of Rome there referred to appeared. The principle of expressing the gospel in a theology that should embody the perfect knowledge was due to Greek influence, as we have seen, as were also the first essays in this direction. The matter was then taken up by the Romans and worked out according to their legal genius. That is, orthodox dogmatics is due, *generically*, to Greek influence;

specifically, the dogmas were all of them nurtured, and some of them born, in Rome. The theological stream, having taken its rise in Greek soil, flowed now through Roman territory, and drew up into itself Roman elements. This accounts for the fact that the doctrines which are current in western Christendom are so universally colored by the Roman juridical ideas. It accounts also for the dominating influence of Paul in theology, his terminology being especially susceptible of legal manipulation. It accounts still further for the unsatisfactory form, philosophically considered, of many doctrines formulated under Roman influence; for the Romans had no independent speculative genius.

The influence of the Roman Tertullian in the former age had already been far-reaching. In the period now before us Augustine is the great name—the lineal theological descendant of Tertullian. Augustine carried the development forward, and exerted an incalculable influence in forming orthodox theology and in directing its subsequent course. He is of special interest for our discussion, because in his system there comes to light, although he was apparently unconscious of the fact, the inherent contradiction into which Christianity had run. On the one hand, he made salvation depend upon membership in the earthly church organization, with participation in its or-

dinances and the acceptance of its creed; while, on the other hand, he maintained that salvation depends solely upon the free sovereign grace and election of God, conditioned only by faith in Christ.

But while this period contains much of interest for a detailed history of the church and of doctrine, yet with these remarks we may pass it here; for there was no change in underlying theological principle from Origen to Luther, if, indeed, we are to find it even then.

III. THE OBSCURATION OF THE GOSPEL RESULTING FROM THE EARLY TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

The discussion hitherto in this chapter has been occupied with the transformation of Christianity that took place during the early history of the church. It is now necessary to observe more particularly the nature of this change and see how it caused an eclipse of the original gospel of Jesus.

The radical character of the change.

The obscuration of the gospel resulting from the success of the ecclesiastical movement as distinguished from the theological is apparent to every candid student of history. The secret of it may be expressed in a sentence: The early ecclesiastical transformation of Christianity involved the substitution of the church for the

Christ as the object of faith, and hence as the means of salvation; or, to say the least, Christ could be found only through the church, which therefore conditioned salvation.

There can be no question, as will be shown in chap. iv, that Christ and the apostles made salvation a vital, not a mechanical, matter. It did not depend upon ordinances, however much it might express itself in them or encourage itself by them. It depended solely upon a faith which brought man into such a relation of confident reliance upon God and willingness to do his will that God could teach him how to live and give him the power to realize the new life in actual character and deeds. The early transformation of the church, with the new theories involved, obscured this New Testament idea of salvation. The process of change may be traced more or less clearly, as indicated above, and certainly the resulting condition of things is all too plain. Salvation came to depend, not upon union with Christ, but upon union with the church. Not figuratively, but actually, were sins washed away by the baptismal waters; and the perpetuation of God's gracious favors could be secured only by continued participation in the Lord's Supper, which now had become a sacrament. These were both administered by the church through its priests. Hence salvation was impossible out-

side the church. Ceremonialism replaced, or at least conditioned, salvation as a living process. Ceasing to be obtained by a vital process, salvation ceased to be a vital matter; or, at best, living was regulated by what the church said, rather than by what Christ commanded.

In connection with this ecclesiastical obscuration, account must also be taken of the secularization of the worship of the church by the introduction of rites and ceremonies from the neighboring heathen cults. As to just how great this influence was there is difference of opinion, but without doubt it was considerable. The form of administering the ordinances, the character of church architecture, the observance of days and seasons, the worship of saints and images—these and many other things were influenced by the heathen environment, which cast its ceremonial and superstitious shadows over the simplicity of the primitive Christian worship.

But, while the eclipse of the gospel due to Roman influence was disastrous, that due to the Greek influence during the formative period of the church was still deeper and darker—was, indeed, the most radical metamorphosis of Christianity that has ever taken place.

In the first place, and of chief importance, the transfer of base from faith to knowledge

caused a fundamental obscuration of the gospel by radically changing its nature and the field of its operation. Not that the theological expression of the gospel in a philosophical form congenial with contemporary culture constitutes in itself an evil. On the contrary, this is necessary to its proper comprehension in any age, and to its most effective influence. Christianity has intellectual aspects and relations that need systematic expression. The obscuration results only when the gospel forgets its real nature, and not only expresses itself in philosophical form, but so identifies itself with this expression as to lose its original character as a religion of faith. Nor does this identification need to be absolute in order to constitute an eclipse. That result will be produced if the change from faith to knowledge is pronounced enough to affect permanently the distinctive principle of Christianity and upset the old balance of truth by the substitution of a new governing idea.

This is exactly what was accomplished in the early historical development that culminated in the theology of Origen. Christianity there not only produced a theology, but went farther, and became identified with this to such an extent that it was transferred from the religious realm, where Christ established it, to the intellectual realm of philosophy. Now philosophy

deals only with ideas, in their thought-relations. This is not its fault, but its high calling and lasting glory. Its proper task is to interpret the world to thought, by means of ideas and concepts. But for that very reason philosophy cannot take the place of religion. The thought is not the thing; the idea of God is not God himself. Both philosophy and religion have God as their final goal. But in philosophy God is at the last still only an idea; in religion he is the final personal reality. In philosophy we are related to him in thinking; in religion we are related to him by the whole moral and religious nature as well. Philosophy is thus only a segment of religion, the intellectual segment. Religion includes this, and, in addition, the great realms of moral judgment, feeling, and willing. Indeed, if Christianity is to be confined to any one realm, it belongs, in Christ's thought, far more truly to one of these last than to that of ideas. Therefore to identify Christianity with philosophy, or even to turn it determinatively in that direction, as was done in the early historical process, was radically to change its nature and obscure its characteristic quality by deflecting it into the channel to which it least properly belongs. Intellectual assent to a body of philosophical knowledge does not

meet at all Christ's requirements of faith, even though this philosophy has to do with divine things.

This transformation constitutes the original and fundamental Christian heresy; none the less a heresy because it has arrogated to itself exclusive right to the term "orthodoxy," and can still maintain that title for the reason that it is in possession of the standards by which it judges truth, standards which it has itself set up and declared to be authoritative. It is a heresy that has never been eradicated. While *practically* it has been overridden in every time of religious revival, when the original power of the gospel has asserted itself in spite of obstacles, yet *theoretically* it has remained unchanged from that day to this, and has dethroned Christianity from its rightful dominion over the entire range of human life. The reason why it has not proved even more disastrous is the fact of the divine persistence of the faith itself. However it might be with individuals, assent to the creed was never completely divorced, in the church as a whole, from living faith in Jesus. The gospel survived in spite of its theological obscuration; and even in the darkest ages, when the teaching that men could be saved only by entering the organized church and subscribing to its authorized creed

cast its withering blight upon religion and morality, still true religion was conserved and society preserved by the existence of sincere and pious saints and sages that had felt the inspiration of direct contact with the divine Lord.

Another result of the success of this process leading to the establishment of Origen's theology was not immediately apparent, and could not be until the thinking of the world should change. This very success also, on the other hand, helped to keep thought from changing, for it caused the perpetuation of the particular philosophy then dominant. It was not philosophy in general, or in the abstract, with which Christianity became identified, but the specific philosophy that up to that time had been developed, and was then current. Christianity thus took up into itself as a constituent element the philosophical and scientific ideas of the Alexandrian period, colored by the world-view and the intellectual atmosphere of that age. Did that make the culture of that age divine, along with the religion which had appropriated it? Or would the old world-view pass away, would the thinking of men change, and would this culture some day become so obsolete as to bring the gospel itself into disrepute, and thus rob men living in a new civilization of the blessings of Christianity? We shall see.

The eclipse of the personal element in the gospel.

Looking at the early historical movement as a whole, and from a somewhat different angle of vision, its effect is still more clearly discernible. It involved the elimination, or at least the radical obscuring, of that which is most characteristic of religion in general, and of the Christian religion in particular — namely, the personal element.

This is apparent from what has already been said concerning the process of transformation, but may well be brought out definitely here.

1. Salvation was at first a new life of faith in Christ, involving a personal trust which so united the believer with him that the Master's power to conquer sin became the disciple's also. There came a double change. On the one hand, under the influence of the Greek spirit and philosophy, there was a change in the *nature* of faith, from personal trust and allegiance to intellectual assent; the act of the whole moral and religious nature became an act of the intellect alone. On the other hand, this involved a change in the *object* of faith, the intellect turning from Christ to what he said, and to what others said that he said, and then to what ought to be thought concerning the kind of person he was. That is, the object of faith ceased to be Christ and became the creed — the body of knowledge that deals

with Christ and his teaching. The object of faith was still further affected by the Roman influence, which made the thing requiring acceptance not so much the creed as the church and its ordinances. Here the church was substituted for Christ as the creed had been by the Greeks. There was thus a double depersonalization of the religion: faith largely ceased to be personal in its nature, due to its conversion from a religious into an intellectual act; and in the object toward which it is directed, due to the displacement of the personal Christ by the impersonal creed and the impersonal church.

This characterization is not to be taken as absolute. As a matter of fact, there never was a time when faith in Christ did not involve belief in what he said, as well as trust in him; while, on the other hand, the time never came when the intellectual acceptance of the creed and the church was totally divorced from all connection with the personal Lord, who, whether rightly or wrongly, was regarded as the author of the existing dogmatics and church institution. Yet the change was decisive enough to affect radically and permanently the distinctive character of Christianity, and deprive it of the wealth of personal relationships which it had in the thought and life of its founder.

2. Again, at the first the church was under the free leadership of the Holy Spirit. It was a

united company of Spirit-filled men and women. So led, they elected their officers and carried on their work. They agreed together because, and in so far as, they all possessed the common spirit. Nothing is plainer in the New Testament church than this. But this consciousness of spiritual inspiration gradually waned under long-continued contact with the world, the unexpected delay of the return of the Lord, the encroaching pretensions of the clergy, and other influences surrounding the early church. Then other authority and leadership seemed necessary to take the Spirit's place—something tangible and able to enforce its claims with visible power. Moreover, abuses and extravagances were common under the old free spiritual régime, and the leaders of the church more and more desired to have things reduced to decency and order. So the old dominance of the Spirit was gradually supplanted by the authority of tradition, and by the "proprieties," and later by the written word of the New Testament—which was formed into a canon partly to meet this very need,—and still later by the creed and the church, all of these, in turn, involving the growing influence of the church leaders.

Thus the Christian communities were brought into subjection to impersonal authority, and the unity of the Spirit was superseded by uniformity

of belief and of worship. No one will question that the old order, even with all of its abuses, was richer in life and power. It was this very spiritual exuberance that did more than anything else to give to Christianity its triumphs in the early centuries. Impersonal authority was substituted at the expense of vital force. Inspiration died as theology and priest acquired dominion.

Perhaps this external authority was necessary during the long tutelage of the new races with which Christianity came into contact. Be that as it may, it involved a decided depersonalization of the gospel, which, if it continued permanent after its temporary purpose should have been served, would remain as an element of misunderstanding and inefficiency. The time of tutelage and bondage to law must again pass away and let the original spiritual leadership return in fuller and more intelligently accepted power.

The elimination of the personal element from Christianity may be further illustrated by examples taken from the growth of special doctrines.

1. The substitution of a philosophical "God" for the personal "Father" of Jesus. Jesus' habitual and characteristic mode of designating God was by the term "Father." In the four gospels, not counting duplicates in parallel passages, he is

reported as using that term one hundred and fifty-eight times. He uses it almost exclusively in prayer and in reference to God's forgiveness and providence. The term "God" he employs only one hundred and thirty-three times, and nearly always in formal and technical ways — one-third of the instances being in such customary phrases as "kingdom of God," "Son of God," and "word of God." He never uses it in speaking of forgiveness, nor employs it in prayer; unless one considers as prayer his bitter exclamation on the cross, when for one dark moment he loses the consciousness of his Father's presence. But even then he immediately recovers himself, and says: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Jesus' Father was his dearest personal friend, his constant counselor and inspiration. His thought of God and his filial relation to God are unique and constituent elements in his personality and in the religion that he founded.

But even within New Testament times Christ's thought of God began to be obscured. It was impossible for his disciples to have the intimate consciousness of God as Father that Jesus possessed. So it need not surprise us to mark a change in Paul's usage. In the thirteen epistles ascribed to him he employs the term "Father" only forty-five times, and the term "God" five hundred and forty-two times; while in his four

great epistles, which have so extensively influenced theology, he speaks of the "Father" only sixteen times, and of "God" three hundred and fifty-one times. It is not assumed that Paul failed to grasp Christ's thought of the fatherhood of God. His writings show clearly that he did understand that idea, and experienced great comfort in the consciousness that God is a tender Father from whose love nothing can separate his children. But here is a remarkable change in terminology, to say the least. It is not without significance that Paul said, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God," instead of, "from the love of our Father." Terminology and thought are closely connected. The very name "Father" involves some of the closest and tenderest ties known to earth; while the term "God" is formal, governmental, and, in philosophical usage, often impersonal. Paul reverses in a striking manner the emphasis of Christ's terminology. This indicates a change from the atmosphere of Christ's habitual thought of God, even though Paul shows that he understood that thought.

When once we get beyond the New Testament writings, the change is rapid and unmistakable. Greek philosophy knew nothing about a personal Father in Christ's sense, but it understood something about a God, and had long been accustomed to the use of that term. Hence that was the

point at which it attached itself to Christianity. After three centuries of philosophical manipulation, there emerged a metaphysical tri-personal God that was supposed to meet the requirements of thought. But what was gained for thinking, if there was a gain, was lost for life. Jesus' tender, loving, watchful, personal Father had disappeared from theological Christianity, which had received, as a substitute, the attenuated God of Græco-Christian speculation, cut off from touch with living men. The philosophical tri-personalization, whether true or false, had resulted in a practical depersonalization of God.

2. The substitution of a Logos doctrine for the historical Jesus. When the philosophical spirit began to work on the Christian tradition, the effort to understand the nature of the founder of the new religion was naturally one of its first undertakings. The rudiments of this christological speculation are found within the New Testament itself, in the prologue to John's gospel, if not throughout his entire writings, in Paul's epistles, and in the epistle to the Hebrews. In the New Testament, however, true to the spirit and purpose everywhere characterizing those writings, the matter is still always presented in its practical religious aspects.

Outside the New Testament the discussion soon developed into a purely philosophical specu-

lation. The point of attachment was the Greek doctrine of the Logos ; and the first step was the identification of the historical Jesus with the Logos. The Logos doctrine had already had a history of five hundred years, and had become a component part of Greek philosophy. When Jesus was identified with the Logos, therefore, he at once became the subject of metaphysical investigation and definition. The historical person lost his vivid distinctness, and the philosophical idea took his place. Christology displaced Christ. The second step was the inclusion of the Logos within the essence of the Deity. Jesus thus became philosophically incorporated into a metaphysical God, and the further trinitarian speculations became a necessity.

The point at issue here is not whether the ideas advanced were right or wrong, but the fact of the substitution of ideas for the personal reality. The change removed Christ from the realm of historical and practical life to the realm of speculative metaphysics. It was a kind of christological pantheism, as if in our day a doctrine of Christ should be worked out in conformity with the current ruling philosophical idea—that of evolution.

3. The substitution of a juridical "justification" for Christ's personal "forgiveness." Jesus regarded sin as a personal matter; it is not so much the transgression of law as disloyalty to the

author of law; not so much the breaking of God's law as the breaking of God's heart. The requirement is supreme love to God and fraternal love to man. Sin is failure so to love. Sin is, therefore, essentially personal.

As sin was personal in Jesus' thought, so also was the forgiveness of sin. He habitually spoke of forgiveness. It was the nature of the Father to forgive, and the desire of his heart that men should repent in order that they might be forgiven. The number of times he used the word cannot adequately represent the place it had in his mind and teaching; for the same thought is conveyed by other words and by parables. He used the term "forgive" or "forgiveness" twenty-six times in the gospels. He used the word "justify" only twice, in the Pauline sense, if indeed these two are so used. In Matt. 12:37 he says, referring to the final judgment, "By thy words thou shalt be justified," and in Luke 18:14 he says, "The publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee."

Here again the future development was started within the New Testament. It is a well-known fact that Paul employed the term "justification" to express the idea for which Christ used the word "forgiveness." Paul speaks of justification thirty times in his extant letters, and of forgiveness only six times. But, still more significant,

in his four great epistles he uses "justification" twenty-eight times and "forgiveness" only once, and then in a quotation from the Old Testament. With Paul himself it may be that here, also, the change was one of terminology rather than of thought. It must also be borne in mind that he was combating legalism polemically, and that this influenced his terminology. Still it can hardly be questioned that Paul's conception of the matter was more restricted than Christ's, due to his pharisaical education and the persistence of old habits of thinking.

Outside the religious atmosphere that pervades the New Testament, this legal view of forgiveness made rapid way. The metaphysical discussions concerning God were foreign to Roman habits of thought, and were left in the main to Greek theologians. The Romans took up rather the questions concerning sin and salvation. And when the Roman theologian, dominated by the legal genius of his nation, read the New Testament, he did not choose Christ's term "forgiveness," but Paul's "justification." The law knows no forgiveness. And so Tertullian, the father of Roman theology, himself a trained Roman lawyer, grasped that which he could understand, and at the very start turned the theology of salvation into that legal and governmental channel which it has followed ever since.

The significance of the change is evident. Forgiveness is not merely the remission of penalty. It is not the judicial pronouncement that the repenting sinner is now acquitted; much less that he is acquitted because someone else has paid the penalty for him, as later theology has it. That is not forgiveness, but something else and something less. Forgiveness is pre-eminently a personal matter: the Father's pardon of the repentant son, the removal of the personal barrier that sin has raised to interrupt the communion between them. It is not a commercial barter nor a governmental expedient, but a free act of pardoning grace; and as such Christ always represents it. Justification, on the contrary, is formal, legal, forensic: the acquittal of a criminal at the bar of justice, or the pardon of the guilty subject by his monarch. It is entirely inadequate to do justice to the thought of Jesus, and in its later theological form does decided violence to his teaching. Its substitution for "forgiveness" in the theology of the church has occasioned a serious depersonalization of Christianity.

4. Closely connected with the foregoing was the development of a legal and governmental view of the atonement, to the exclusion of its personal aspects.

Christ did not say much about the atonement, which has occupied so important a place in the

theology of the church; and he never used the word itself. Still, he said enough about that which the word stands for to assure us both of its purpose and of its spirit. It is safe to say that the historical development of that doctrine would have been widely different if his personal way of looking at it had not been exchanged for a legal view; for the elimination of the personal element wrought sad havoc here. Later dogmatics had much to say about the atonement as the satisfaction of the justice of God. But in Christ's thought the atonement was not the satisfaction of God's justice so much as the satisfaction of the Father's love. "God so loved the world that he gave his son." And with this all the rest of the New Testament agrees. Paul says: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Not once in all the New Testament is the term "justice of God" used in the later theological sense, although once, in the classical passage in Romans, God is said to be just, or righteous, in connection with the atonement. It is doubtless true that the atonement is intimately connected with God's justice. But it is no less true that theology has emphasized this phase of the subject out of all proportion, and has overlooked the fact that, while the New Testament does not speak of the judicial aspect of the atonement at all, or at most

only once, it does speak of the atonement again and again as being the satisfaction of God's love. By this wrong emphasis great injustice has been done to the more personal aspects of the matter. Even if God could save a man by some legal device, if he could reclaim a world by some governmental makeshift, it would not accomplish his purpose unless it reached the hearts of men and bound them to his own in truest love. God wants loving sons, not merely loyal subjects; and love is personal. The cross of Christ is the supreme manifestation of personal vicarious divine love.

Thus in these various ways — and the special instances might be multiplied — was the personal element crowded out of the gospel of Jesus, as the result of tendencies set on foot in the early transformation of Christianity. The time came when theological and institutional Christianity almost ceased to be a personal matter between man and God and man and his fellow-men, and resolved itself into the observance of churchly ceremonies and adherence to a set of scholastic ideas. The personal power of God had departed, and there remained an arid wilderness of impersonal substitutes.

The moral eclipse of the gospel.

The theological eclipse of the gospel had substituted acceptance of the orthodox creed for

loyal trust in Christ; and had thereby made salvation a matter of intellectual conviction rather than of moral and religious regeneration.

The ecclesiastical eclipse had substituted faith in the church for faith in Christ, and had made salvation a matter of ordinances and observances, instead of a vital renewal by the power of God, conditioned upon a new attitude toward him.

These two changes led naturally to a great moral eclipse of the gospel. The theological development, by identifying Christianity with philosophy, had removed it from the realm of motive and action, and so had divorced it from the practical life of the world. The domain of ethics was left to take care of itself. A man was all right if his thinking was orthodox; he might do what he pleased. Above all things he must not be a heretic; and heresy was a matter of right thinking, not of right doing. That, in a nutshell, is the theoretical justification of the morality of the Middle Ages. The theory was not lived out in uniform consistency, fortunately for the world; but that was the logic of the situation which made possible the immorality of the so-called Christian church.[1]

[1] A full discussion of this subject belongs to the history of ethics, and would here lead us too far afield. As early as the Montanist struggle a party had begun to protest against the continuous secularizing of the church and its lax morality. But the great opportunist party contended that too strict a mo-

The ecclesiastical evolution, on the other hand, kept in touch with practical life, but changed the standard of living. The bishop took the place of Christ as lawgiver. It may be claimed, and is claimed, that this was no change; that Christ continued to legislate through the bishop.

rality would interfere with the dominion of the church over the world, and began to distinguish between the morality required of the clergy and that necessary among the laity. Hence it soon came to pass that "in order to be a Christian a man no longer required in any sense to be a saint." There was legitimized an average morality, in accordance with which the whole world could live. Those who were not satisfied with this loose morality could console themselves with the meritorious practice of asceticism. As Harnack says: "Alongside of a code of morals to which anyone in case of need could adapt himself, the church began to legitimize a morality of self-chosen, refined sanctity which really required no Redeemer." This asceticism, culminating in monachism, exercised, from the end of the third century, an ever-increasing power in the Catholic church, with its alluring invitation to earnest spirits to escape the growing corruption by flight from the world. Thus the church, in its threefold order of priests, monks, and laity, offered also a threefold piety, some element of which was suited to every man. The theoretical foundation for these distinctions was found in the famous twofold morality: natural morality, based upon the *via media* of Aristotle and the four cardinal virtues; and supernatural morality, based upon 1 Cor. 13:13 and the Beatitudes, this preconditioned by celibacy, poverty, and obedience, and possible only through the church and for the clergy. Here should also be mentioned the Jesuitical doctrine of "probabilism": "if an opinion is probable, it is lawful to follow it, though the contrary opinion is more probable." For, although this doctrine was not "scientifically" formulated until 1577, still the principle then enunciated had been operative in the church throughout the Middle Ages.

But the impartial student of history must demur. As the church moved down the historical stream and came into contact with unfriendly influences, it was corrupted by them. Nothing is more certain. The bishops who were made the guardians and interpreters of the truth were fallible men, and were themselves involved in the hostile and corrupting environment. Thus the moral standard of the church was ever changing, and apparently ever falling lower. Moreover, the probability of ethical reform was lost from the fact that the standard was now within the church itself, and firmly fixed there by the very theory of development that had led to this condition of things. The church did not need to go back to Christ, for itself was Christ perpetuated. It did not need to return to the New Testament, for it continued the New Testament. Thus ever sufficient unto itself, and revolving upon itself, supposing that it could not get away from its Lord, it moved forward oblivious to the fact that it was plunging into moral degradation, and that its path was strewn with deeds of moral monstrosity. Both the blind and the blind leaders of the blind fell together into the ditch.

Fortunately here, also, the result was not wholly a logical conclusion from the premises. In spite of the church theory, both bishops and people

caught glimpses of Christ's divine moral requirements. Indeed, the gospel of Jesus somehow succeeded in perpetuating itself in the church. We must never forget that the reason for the being of both church and creed was Jesus Christ. His glory might be dimmed; it was never wholly darkened nor extinguished. However far the church might get away from its divine Master's leadership, it could never break entirely with him. We may adapt to the church the words of the poet, and say truly:

> But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there hath passed away a glory from the earth;

but still also we must add:

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory does it come,
> From God who is its home.

It is evident, therefore, that the result of this long process of historical development was the eclipse of the gospel of Jesus, an eclipse so dark and dense that it might be called total were it not for the dim radiance which still penetrated the obscuring dogmatic and ecclesiastical formations —a radiance that has deceived men into thinking that the clouds thus illumined were themselves divine. In the night that came before the dawn of the Reformation even the light of the

gospel had become darkness, and how great was that darkness!

In concluding this chapter it is worth while to pass in review the results reached. The fundamental thing in the obscuration of the gospel was the dethronement of Jesus Christ from his governing position in Christianity as Savior from sin and Lord of living. This displacement took a double form. Ecclesiastically, due chiefly to Roman influence, it involved a practical change in the object of faith—faith in Christ being transformed into faith in the church, which now came to be regarded as the mediator of salvation, being the depository and interpreter of the saving truth, and the administrator of the saving ordinances. Theologically, due chiefly to Greek influence, it involved a still more fundamental doctrinal change, which affected both the object of faith and its nature—faith as religious confidence and trust in Christ being superseded by intellectual assent to a body of knowledge authoritatively formulated into a creed. This transformed the *pistis* into a *gnosis*, and identified Christianity with speculative theology, thereby divorcing it from the realm of the conscience and the will, and virtually shutting it up within the domain of the intellect.

This primary transformation of the gospel, involving the double displacement of Christ, con-

tained in principle the whole matter, and determined the historical development of Christianity for twelve centuries. During this period the germ so introduced expanded, and firmly intrenched itself in an elaborate system of dogmatics and a firmly articulated ecclesiastical organization, which removed Christianity still farther from the purity, simplicity, and power of the original gospel.

The eclipse thus accomplished was accompanied by the depersonalization of Christianity. Personal loyalty to Christ gave way to allegiance to the impersonal church and creed. The personal leadership of the Holy Spirit was superseded by the authority of the impersonal tradition and the written word of the Scriptures, mediated in turn by the impersonal church. Jesus' personal Father, the true God of Christianity, was transformed into a metaphysical idea. Jesus himself became identified with the ruling conception of contemporary Greek philosophy, that of the Logos. Jesus' idea of the personal nature of sin and forgiveness was changed into the legal view of sin and the juridical idea of justification; while his thought of the atonement as the saving expression of God's love was converted into the propitiation of God's wrath and the satisfaction of his justice.

These fundamental changes helped on, if they

did not directly cause, the dark moral eclipse which the gospel suffered during the Middle Ages. Christianity being theoretically removed from the realm of the conscience and the will, its great moral requirements became practically nullified in the world of affairs. Men attached themselves to Christianity by swearing allegiance to the church and its creed, while they kept on living according to the old laws of the selfish and sinful world, even turning the church itself into an engine of worldly ambition. Thus it came to pass that Christianity, so radically had it changed its character and lost its light, became itself a part of the dark night which settled over the life of the Middle Ages, broken only here and there by the narrow circle of light cast by some lone saint who had felt the inspiration of the still imperishable faith, and had come face to face with his undying personal Lord.

CHAPTER III.

THE HISTORICAL RECOVERY OF THE GOSPEL.

THE movement for the recovery of the gospel is due, as has already been shown, to the modern spirit and its insatiable desire to get at the reality of things. It was the awakening of this spirit during the latter half of the fifteenth century, and its investigation of the world at first hand along the various avenues of knowledge, that gave birth to our modern civilization. The domain of religious life and thought did not escape, but to this also the new spirit finally turned in its quest for ultimate truth.

Just as the obscuration of the gospel was not a simple and momentary thing, but the result of a long and intricate process of development, so has it been also with the recovery of the gospel. It is being accomplished through a complex historical process, which has already been going on for four centuries, and in which we are still engaged. Yet the end is so nearly reached that the significance of the movement is discernible, some of its results are reasonably well established, and its final valuation is approximately possible.

There are three clearly marked periods in the

progress of events. The first is that of the great Reformation, when the modern spirit broke forth in a vigorous and stormy demand for practical religious satisfaction. The second is the post-Reformation relapse, in which Protestantism turned its attention to doctrinal controversy and the formation of systems of theology that gave the old Catholic heresy a Protestant sanction and an enlarged influence. The third is the period of the nineteenth century Reformation, characterized as truly as the first by the demand for reality; while, with greater patience and a clearer understanding of the situation, it has been working its way to the desired end by the scientific method and a return to the historical sources of Christianity. A section may well be devoted to each of these phases of the historical movement for the recovery of the gospel.

I. THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION.

Properly speaking, the sixteenth century Reformation was not a theological reformation; or, at most, it was such only incidentally. Primarily it was a practical reform of ecclesiastical and religious abuses. In other words, it was the reformation of the Roman element in contemporary Christianity.

Let it be recalled that in the early obscuration of the gospel the primitive trust in Christ and

loving loyalty to him had suffered a double displacement—in the nature of faith and in the object of faith. Passing for the present the first of these, the change in the object of faith was in turn of a twofold character, Christ being displaced by the church and the creed. Or, as theology was of only secondary importance to the Roman mind, it is perhaps more accurate to say that in the West salvation came to be regarded as mediated by the church through the ordinances and the creed. This substitution of an ecclesiastical organization for Christ was the distinctive Roman contribution to the development of Christianity.

Now, the Lutheran Reformation was at first and in its real genius a revolt against this Roman perversion of Christianity. It was, therefore, of a practical rather than of a theological nature. It was an attempt to reform the glaring evils in the existing church, and to make salvation a real and living matter, depending on right relations to God through Jesus Christ. It was an attempt of the new religious spirit to restore Christ to the position that had been usurped by the church. This gave it its character and determined its scope.

The story of the Reformation is too familiar to be retold here. The corruption of the church had become so scandalous that it could no longer be

tolerated by the independent spirit of the awakening world. At the same time the new temper could not be satisfied with a mechanical salvation that came through the mediation of priests and the sale of indulgences. The religious demands of the new age became incarnate in Martin Luther. There was the hopeless struggle for a real salvation, which could not be found in the endless round of penances and churchly works. There was the dawning light, followed by the glorious day, as the New Testament at last lay before him, and he came into touch with the living God by faith in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. And then, as he began to realize how radically contemporary Christianity had departed from the New Testament way of salvation, so joyously verified in his own experience, there was a determined outcry against the corrupt institutional mediator of an artificial salvation — an outcry in which all the pent-up struggling spirit within him burst forth in an indignant and vigorous opposition so deep and strong that the old order had to give way before it. It was the protest of the aroused spirit against the church instead of the Christ; it was the indignation of the hungry soul at a stone in place of bread; it was an irresistible outburst of the religious nature demanding living satisfaction. The watchword of Paul, after his bitter struggle for righteousness by the deeds of

the law, was caught up by humanity after its long contest with the new legalism of ecclesiastical prescriptions, and "justification by faith in Christ" again offered a way of escape for the weary and despairing soul. It was a revival of the very essence of Christianity—a real and remarkable recovery of the gospel.

The religious and practical character of the Reformation is evident. In this, also, it was a return to the true spirit of the gospel. One is profoundly impressed with this fact. Coming into the spirit of the Reformation is like stepping back into the apostolic age. We emerge from the atmosphere of hopeless striving for a salvation that may be bought by human efforts and worldly gold into the free air of the old glorious gospel of the New Testament, with its gracious gift of reconciliation and living communion with God through Jesus Christ, of peace for the conscience through justification by faith, and of divine power for help in every time of need. It was this that made the Reformation so welcome, and that gave it its power. When such a salvation was offered to a world longing for religious reality it was everywhere hailed with joyous acceptance.

The Lutheran Reformation did not get beyond this practical religious stage. Or, if it did, it got beyond its proper range, and lost itself among the

theological rocks and shoals where its peculiar genius could not serve as pilot. The doctrines changed by the Reformation were only those that had an immediate bearing upon the practical issues involved. The doctrine of salvation by trusting the church, receiving its ordinances, and obeying its injunctions was changed back into the New Testament doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. That was the fundamental thing, and furnished the material principle of the Reformation. It involved the repudiation of the authority of the church as co-ordinate with the Bible, and substituted the new doctrine of the all-sufficiency of the New Testament as the Christian's guide in matters of faith and practice. This was the formal principle of the Reformation. It involved, again, the denial of the church's official authority to interpret Scripture, and substituted the idea of individual right and responsibility in interpretation. This constituted the individualistic element characteristic of Protestantism. These three doctrines, salvation by faith, the sole authority of Scripture, individual right and responsibility in interpreting Scripture — all of them relating to the practical issues of a great religious reformation — are pretty much the extent of the doctrinal reform of the sixteenth century movement. No one questions their great importance; few will question their harmony with the spirit of

the New Testament gospel. They still remain the three fundamental and distinctive principles of Protestantism.

During the centuries of churchly life under the influence of Rome, the dust of superstition and the cobwebs of human fantasy had gathered over the face of God's religious masterpiece and obscured its true character. The Reformation cleared away the accumulations of the passing years, and revealed again to the world the matchless power and beauty of the Master's thought.

II. THE POST-REFORMATION RE-ECLIPSE OF THE GOSPEL.

If the sixteenth century Reformation had fully succeeded, we should not need to discuss further the recovery of the gospel. But unfortunately it was only a partial success; and that for two reasons. In the first place, it emancipated only a portion of the Christian world. The other part remained, and still remains, under the old erroneous ecclesiastical system. Indeed, that system strengthened its hold and increased its claims during the struggle.

The second cause of partial failure lay within the camp of the Reformers themselves. It must be remembered that they also had been educated in the intellectual environment of the old system. Their mental tendencies were established in the

groove which the church had followed for centuries. The old angle of vision had not been wholly altered. They were feeling their way in the midst of the semi-darkness of the new dawn. They still saw through a glass darkly. The smoke of the battle yet hung over the field and obscured the clearness of their sight. And so it happened that, while two or three fundamental principles were clearly discerned and became the governing ideas of the reform movement, these purely religious and ethical convictions were held by men of the old scholastic temper, and remained entangled in the traditional metaphysical conceptions. Thus the changes in dogmatics did not affect the underlying theological presuppositions, but only certain individual doctrines; and Protestant theology became the continuation of Catholic theology, as this in turn had perpetuated Greek philosophy.

Not that this was done consciously and by intention. It is simply an illustration of the persistency of ideas, and of the fact that a man cannot wholly escape the influence of his educational environment. Under the power of the awakened religious impulse, the Reformers broke away from the old order of things in a few vital points, and thought that thereby they had broken with it everywhere. This mistake was the easier because that with which they did not break was

of a different character from the other, had come into the church at a different time and from a different source, and was beyond their immediate purpose. They gave their attention to the Roman addition to the gospel; that which escaped them was the older metaphysical Greek obscuration. A brief review of the historical situation will make this evident.

The distinctively theological interest which first began to make itself strongly felt in the church during the second century centered immediately in Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity. These doctrines were converted into dogmas by the first six general councils, and have always continued to be regarded in a peculiar sense as the fundamental dogmatic heritage of the church. They are justly called the Greek contribution to Christianity, for, however they may have been influenced by the Roman mind, they were born of the Greek spirit, and their form and development were decisively determined by Greek philosophy. That these dogmas soon ceased to be living issues and to find a place in the interests of men did not disturb their theological authority, but rather strengthened it. The fact that they became petrified made them an all the more satisfactory, because more unshakable, foundation for a church which was built upon the traditions of the past. It was

upon this foundation of fixed dogma that Augustine set up his theological structure of sin, grace, and means of grace, and the whole Middle Ages occupied itself with tearing down and rebuilding in varying forms this superstructure. It never thought of interfering with the foundation. The only part of the work of the Middle Ages that could claim at all the same character as that of the old dogmatic symbols was that of the fourth Lateran council (1215) which established as dogma the doctrines of the eucharist, baptism, and penance, and attached these directly to the old dogmas of Christology and the Trinity. These new dogmas, however, clearly in no way weakened the authority of those formulated over five hundred years before, but rather increased this authority by adding another layer to the foundation. Still this later addition, even though regarded as dogma, and therefore more sacred than the changeable theology, was never accorded quite the same reverence given to the more ancient stratum of dogma, as the following period demonstrates.

Nothing more clearly manifests the untheological temper of the Reformation than its treatment of this Catholic dogma. The ancient layer, which had remained crystallized for a thousand years, the Reformation never even seriously thought of calling in question. As much for

the Augsburg Confession as for the council of Trent the church dogmas of Christology and the Trinity remained the unshaken foundation. With reference to the newer dogmatic formation of 1215 (the eucharist, baptism, and penance) the Reformation assumed a vacillating attitude; while the real reforms were wrought out in the changeable superstructure of theological, but not dogmatically fixed, doctrines of sin, grace, and means of grace, built up by Augustine and the Middle Ages. In this last department the Reformation succeeded fairly well in returning to the New Testament teaching; in the second it tried and failed; while in the first it did not even make the attempt. This meant that the Greek element which had been incorporated into Christianity in the ancient dogmatic formation was not discovered or removed, and that the first and greatest heresy—that Christianity is a body of knowledge upon the acceptance of which salvation depends—passed over into Protestantism unchallenged and unchanged. This was the rock that wrecked the Reformation, checked it midway in its successful course, and broke Protestantism into fragments.

A change of view concerning the ancient dogma is, however, to be noted in the Reformers. They did not retain the dogmas of Christology and the Trinity on the ground that they were the authoritative dogmas of the church—

by no means; but because it was not perceived that they were not contained in the New Testament. They were supposed to be the true evangelical expression of the New Testament teaching, indeed to be nothing other than the gospel itself—an assumption that still remains so firmly fixed in Protestantism that a man who calls them in question is immediately regarded as a heretic, in wide circles, on the ground that he rejects the New Testament teaching concerning God and the divinity of Christ; it not being perceived that this judgment is pronounced on the basis of the Catholic councils instead of the Protestant New Testament. At the Reformation, therefore, the Greek dogmas became fused with the gospel itself even more intimately than before, for now they had been projected back into the Bible.

Before the sixteenth century three ideas with respect to the attainment of salvation were more or less influential: that of trust in the church and its ordinances, that of acceptance of the creed, and the dimmed but divinely persistent idea of faith in Christ. The question of salvation through the church was disposed of by the Reformation, while the idea of salvation by faith in Christ experienced a vigorous revival. The contest now remained, a contest subtle and unsuspected, between the two surviving principles—the newly

revived idea of salvation by faith in Christ, and the old idea of salvation through faith in the creed.

Here, then, was the insoluble antinomy of Protestantism: on the one hand the fundamental principle that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ and by that alone; on the other hand, the persistent idea, adopted from Catholicism, that there is saving efficacy in a body of knowledge; or, at least, that a certain system of dogmas, regarded as true doctrine, must be accepted if a man is to be an orthodox Christian. And another antinomy growing out of or closely associated with it; perhaps, indeed, the same thing under a different aspect: on the one hand, the dominion and free guidance of the Spirit of God; on the other hand, the written law of the Scriptures regarded as an infallibly inspired theological statute book. The history of Protestantism from that day to this is the story of the attempted solution of these antinomies.

As long as the first religious fervor and enthusiasm was in the ascendant, the principle of justification by faith naturally remained the dominant one. But in process of time important changes took place, three of which are especially worthy of notice.

1. Due partly to the need of authoritative teaching, felt by Protestants themselves, partly to the struggle with Catholicism, and partly to the

survival of the old idea of the efficacy of true knowledge, together with the theological tendencies brought over from Catholicism, the Reformers early turned their attention toward questions of dogmatic theology. There resulted the elaborate doctrinal systems of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As has already been observed, these did not differ in principle, nor, indeed, in many of their conclusions, from Catholic theology. It is a generally acknowledged fact that Calvin is in the direct line of theological succession: Tertullian, Augustine, Calvin. The same thing is true to a less extent of the other Reformation theologians. These systems perpetuated the old underlying idea of Christianity as the true system of knowledge, the old scholastic subtleties, and the old unreality and separation from living issues.

Moreover, dogmatic theology acquired even increased influence in Protestantism. In Roman Catholicism, the church with its sacerdotal ordinances and spectacular worship shared the field of interest with dogmatics. Indeed, it was the church that occupied by far the most important place in the religious life of the masses, while theology was relegated to the scholars and teachers. In Protestantism this was reversed. When the church ceased to hold the power of dispensing salvation, it fell from its high place

in the minds of men; and Protestantism has often had a struggle to maintain it with a decent support. On the other hand, theology has received all of the attention which it formerly shared with the church, and every Protestant, be he educated or uneducated, competent or incompetent, has his own doctrinal system which he wants every other man to adopt. Theology received a false importance in the days following the struggle with Gnosticism. It retained that false position through the Middle Ages, when men were subjected to torture that their souls might be saved by the compulsory acceptance of the right doctrine. But in Protestantism it exalted itself still higher, and increased its pretensions, so that its reign would have become intolerable but for the growing idea of individual liberty and the revival of the principle of salvation by faith, which succeeded in coloring with a warmer radiance the icy theological peaks.

2. Another result of the struggle with Catholicism was a new emphasis put upon the Bible, causing a reversal of the relative positions occupied by the material and the formal principles of the Reformation.

The infallible authority of the Bible was not at first the most important tenet of Protestantism. That principle was justification by faith.

This is sufficiently apparent everywhere in the early stages of the Reformation. For instance, Luther's loose and free use of the Scriptures is well known. Justification by faith was the great thing, by which all else, even the Bible itself, was judged by him. The conditions of the early days of Christianity were reproduced. Indeed, the parallel is remarkable. When at the first Christianity was a matter of living reality and made men free in the Spirit, Christians were satisfied to be led of the Spirit. In the first religious exuberance of the Reformation, men again felt themselves near to God and under the guidance of the Spirit; there was no need of external authority. But just as in those early days the need of an external tangible authority was felt more and more as spiritual inspiration declined and controversies threatened the church, so it was again in the Reformation days. Moreover, the Protestant must have some standard of appeal in the conflict with his Catholic antagonist who rested so confidently upon the authority of the church. The leadership of the Spirit was too lofty and intangible a conception for controversial purposes. Hence, inasmuch as the authority of the church had been repudiated, and the authority of the Spirit was inadequate, the Reformers fell back upon the Bible, just as the early Christians had rallied around the apostolic tradition.

As theology, after the Protestant rejection of the church, received all the attention which it had previously shared with the church, here also an analogous result appeared in the case of the Bible, which hitherto had been theoretically regarded as co-ordinate authority with tradition and the church; it now occupied the field alone, and acquired all of the importance that before had been distributed. But this was not all. Still the standard of appeal was not definite enough. Hence under the stress of controversy, in order that assurance might be doubly sure, the Bible was made inflexible by a mechanical theory of inspiration which converted it into an absolutely complete, inerrant, all-sufficient Christian statute book. The Bible, so defined, was then substituted for "justification by faith" as the corner-stone of Protestantism. Thus the material and formal principles of the Reformation had exchanged places.

3. And now, or along with these two movements, another thing took place: the system of dogmatics that had been formulated by the church during the course of its historical development, and had been taken up, elaborated, and emphasized by Protestantism, was unconsciously read back into the Bible, and was supposed to be contained therein bodily. Romanism had no need of such an idea, because it boldly asserted

that the Bible revelation was continued in the church, which was therefore divinely authorized to promulgate a doctrinal system, even one containing new elements. But with Protestantism the case was different. It could not go beyond the Bible. And yet here was its great system of theology which was regarded as both a true and a necessary part of Christianity. Evidently, therefore, it must be in the Bible. And so, without realizing that the dogmatics had come down the historical stream and was composed largely of extra-biblical material, floated with difficulty by proof-texts often wrongly interpreted, the whole system received the divine sanction of its supposed biblical source. Protestants read the words of Paul and thought the thoughts of Tertullian and Augustine and Calvin, and Paul was held responsible for the whole thing.

Thus the theological situation had become greatly complicated. Here was a system of dogmatics derived generically from Catholicism, with false premises as to its own importance due to the old Greek idea of the saving value of knowledge, and largely made up of elements of the ancient philosophical and scientific culture. This system had acquired even greater prominence when the church, with which it had formerly shared attention, lost its hold upon Protestants.

Meanwhile, under the stress of controversy, the material principle of the Reformation, salvation by faith, had yielded first place to the formal principle of the solitary and all-sufficient authority of the Scriptures; while, in the exigencies of the situation, and under false ideas of inspiration, these were transformed into a hard-and-fast artificial Christian statute book. Then the dogmatic system, with its false presuppositions and ancient culture, was read back into the Bible with its new mechanical limitations, and all was surrounded by the divine halo that belongs to religion alone. Hands off theology! hands off the authorized view of the Bible! because the gospel of Jesus is divine. With error bolstering error, and the sanctities of religion made to bolster both, is it any wonder that for long weary years the error held sway, and still does so? For even now it is only by gradual degrees that the real truth concerning this historical process is becoming clear and making its influence felt.

We now come to another and entirely new element in the post-Reformation eclipse of the gospel.

A change had been passing over the thought of the world. In the intellectual renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a new culture had been born. This had taken place con-

temporaneously with the Reformation, but it had not yet acquired enough importance seriously to affect the question there at issue. It was the modern spirit at work in the Reformation, not the modern culture. But the new knowledge grew apace as discoveries, colonization, inventions, and commercial enterprises multiplied. A new science was built up in harmony with the new knowledge of nature and of life. Perspectives changed. New views of life emerged and new valuations of thought. In a word, a new culture had altered the whole aspect of civilization, and substituted another world-view for that of the ancients. Almost literally the old heavens and the old earth had passed away: lo! the ancient world was gone. The place that had known it now knew it no more.

All things had become new—except in theology. "Ay, there's the rub." Let it be recalled that in the early transformation of Christianity from a *pistis* to a *gnosis* the contemporary science and philosophy had been taken up into theology and made a component part of the religion, equally divine with the gospel which they were used to express; that this error was not eradicated by the Reformation, but was taken over into Protestantism along with the Catholic dogmatics. This meant that in Protestant theology the ancient culture was projected into the

modern world under the name and protection of Christianity.

As the volume of new knowledge increased, the modern mind did not understand the theology formed out of elements of the obsolete culture, and dropped it. There arose a new king that knew not Joseph. The forms of speech that had moved the ancient world did not appeal to the new age, and were with difficulty even understood by it. The better it was adapted for its purposes in the ancient time, the less value did it possess for influencing the new. And so it happened that systematic theology still farther lost touch with the masses, who either gave themselves to practical religious activities, innocent of doctrine, or patched up a system, each man for himself, regardless of the historical connections, and thus threw Protestantism into the theological chaos that characterizes it in the popular mind. The most disastrous results, however, appeared among the educated classes, where men and women living in the atmosphere of the new culture were alienated from a Christianity which seemed to be identified with antiquated knowledge, while the alternative had not yet presented itself of changing the theology to meet the new conditions.

Here, then, was an entirely new eclipse of the gospel. It was eclipsed once by its early

entanglement with philosophy. That was bad enough, as it was thereby removed from its true sphere of operation; but it was still tolerable, inasmuch as Christianity continued to appeal to men's minds as long as the thought which it had adopted continued to pass current—that is, up to the modern era. But when the ancient culture became obsolete, theology ceased to have this redeeming virtue, except as men threw themselves back into the atmosphere of the ancient world. The former obscuration of the gospel was due to a change in Christianity; this new eclipse was due to a change in the world's common stock of knowledge; due, indeed, to the very fact that traditional Christianity did not change, and could not, until the old first heresy was discovered and removed. Theology might well have taken to itself the message of the poet's words:

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient
good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep
abreast of Truth.
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must
Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea;
Nor attempt the Future's portals with the Past's blood-rusted key.

III. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY REFORMATION.

In the conditions just described are laid bare the elements of the nineteenth century theological ferment: a new culture, in which the obsolete science and philosophy of the ancient world are perpetuated under the guise of a divine theology that has become a component part of Christianity; this theology demanding the allegiance of the modern spirit, weary of speculative subtleties, and hungry for religious reality. This spirit had been nearly dormant, so far as religious activity was concerned, since the Reformation, apparently having exhausted itself in that great struggle. It had made little protest against the succeeding re-obscuration of the gospel. But now, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it awoke to new life, and began again the search for truth in the religious realm. The result is the nineteenth century Reformation—as truly a great Protestant reform as was that of the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is the complement of that movement: the theological completion of the practical and ecclesiastical reformation. As such, it strikes at the old Greek fallacy, there overlooked, that transformed Christianity from a faith into a philosophy. While the Lutheran Reformation was practical, although with theological implications, the new Reformation is theological, but destined to have far-reaching practical results.

Although developing into a theological reform, however, it was not such in the beginning, either in motive or in point of attachment. The theological citadel was too strongly fortified, even though in error, to have been taken by assault. In fact, the new movement started wholly without reference to dogmatic considerations, and with a temper the farthest removed from the dogmatic spirit. The key to the whole situation lies in this, that the re-awakened spirit, true to its characteristic genius, laid hold of that which was most tangible for scientific purposes — namely, the Christian records as contained in the New Testament literature and the existing monuments of the history of the church. This led to the creation of the new sciences of biblical exegesis and church history. The result of this return to the Christian records was not so much a warfare upon theology as an ignoring of it. The new study cut back of the entire stream of dogmatic development, and began *de novo* to work upon the sources.

The investigation into the history of the church has gradually laid bare the varied fortune of Christianity in the world, and brought to light the main facts relating to the development of the Catholic church and creed. The results, as they affect the present discussion, have furnished the subject-matter of the preceding chapter and the

first two sections of this. Little more needs to be said here; it remains only to point out briefly the influence of this new study of church history upon the rediscovery of the gospel. (1) In the first place, the whole process of the obscuration of the gospel here lies before us. We see the formation and progress of the dogmatic stream, taking its rise in post-apostolic times, flowing through an alien culture, and emptying its mixed and turbid waters into modern religious life. The first step toward the rediscovery of the gospel is this discovery of its obscuration. (2) This dispels the illusion that eighteenth-century Christianity was the same thing as New Testament Christianity. So successfully had eighteenth-century orthodoxy been read back into the New Testament that orthodox and infidel polemicists alike took it for granted that the Christian religion stood or fell with contemporary theology. The knowledge of the historical formation of dogmatics in post-biblical times relieves the New Testament from the onus of upholding the metaphysical conclusions of scholasticism. (3) This suggests what, after all, is the chief value of church history so far as the recovery of the gospel is concerned. It clears the way for the New Testament to exert its normal influence. By the disclosure of the heterogeneous influences surrounding the gospel all through its history, and by

making plain the changes in Christianity due to its absorption of foreign elements from this environment, the work of church history has led us back to the New Testament in a new frame of mind, and with a keener and more critical appreciation of its teachings.

In this new study of the New Testament, the formative literature of Christianity, we come to the heart of the nineteenth-century movement—the open Bible. It was the rediscovery of the Bible that led to the recovery of the gospel.

For centuries the Bible had been a closed book. In the earliest days the gospels and apostolic letters doubtless had a considerable circulation, and were widely read in the churches. But as Latin and Greek ceased to be the languages of popular speech, the people did not understand the Bible as it was read in the liturgical worship of the church, and could not have read it for themselves, even if they had possessed copies of it. But these they did not have. From purely mechanical reasons it was next to impossible to give the Scriptures a general circulation. The epoch-making importance of the printing-press in this respect must not be forgotten. Furthermore, the emphasis put upon the church as a saving institution had transferred popular attention to the church with its private confessional and its public worship, and the people had

lost practical interest in the Bible. To this must be added the fact that the right of authoritative interpretation had been monopolized by the church in the persons of its clergy, so that the people had no right to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. For these reasons by the beginning of the sixteenth century the Bible was almost an unknown book.

The rediscovery of the Bible began with the Lutheran Reformation; and, conversely, began that Reformation. It was the discovery of a complete copy of the Vulgate in the library of the university at Erfurt that started Martin Luther on his career of reform. The abuses existing in the complex ceremonialism of contemporary Catholicism could not stand before the direct religious simplicity and spiritual power of the New Testament gospel. Indeed, it is the instinct of self-preservation that leads the Catholic church to oppose the popular study of the Scriptures. The recovered Bible is destined to bury Catholicism.

But the Bible did not become known among the people at large at the time of the Reformation. It had to make its way in the face of determined opposition and persecution. Traces of the Catholic idea of the danger of a popular reading of the book were carried over into Protestantism. The educated classes, especially, felt that the common people could not under-

stand it and would be excited to lawlessness by the reading of it; and this view seemed to gain some justification from the individualistic and revolutionary aspects of the Reformation. Hence it was many years before the Bible could be read in peace. Moreover, it had to be translated into the modern languages before it could gain general circulation. Still farther, the undue prominence that Protestantism early gave to dogmatics made the creed, rather than the Scriptures, the center of interest. And when men finally reached the Bible they came to it through the creed, and therefore interpreted it in the light of certain theological presuppositions. It could not be understood that way, for it is a book of religion, not of dogmatics. Besides this, the artificial and mechanical theories of inspiration that early came to hedge it about added to the obscuration of its true nature, and increased the difficulty of getting at its real teaching. Thus it was that the open book still remained a closed treasure-house.

But this could not go on forever. Given the aggressive and enlightening conditions of modern life, the misunderstanding of the Bible was bound to give way in time and its real character to assert itself. This was accomplished along two main channels, these sometimes running together in individuals who sympathized

with both movements, and perhaps never clearly separable in any period, but yet always more or less distinct in genesis and genius. Both movements were due to the modern spirit, of which they were the religious expression, and to which, each in its own way, they always remained faithful. The one channel of Bible reopening was popular and practical, the other was literary and scientific.

The popular reopening of the Bible.

Gradually the Bible was translated into the more important languages of Europe, and found its way into the homes of the people. The invention of the printing-press made this general circulation possible to a degree hitherto entirely beyond precedent or even belief. The Reformation theoretically gave every man the right to read this book for himself when it thus came to his door, and the new spirit of individualism soon converted the theoretical right into a practical privilege. So the Bible was everywhere welcomed and read. Its simple presentation of the gospel came upon the world like a new revelation direct from heaven. The masses of the people were not deeply interested in theology; they wanted daily inspiration and help. In the Bible they found it; again "the common people heard him gladly." And among them it encountered the minimum of dog-

matic theory to give it a false coloring. As Jesus turned away from learned, theology-hardened Judea to the freer religious atmosphere and virgin soil of Galilee as offering a more promising field of labor, so now again it was true that, when his message went forth in the language of the people, it was most quickly understood and most gladly received by those who were the farthest removed from the blinding influences of traditional theology.

After two centuries of leavening operation in the quiet seclusion of the home the spirit of the Bible began to make itself felt, and led to great popular revivals of religion. It opened the eyes of Carey and his associates to the duty of the Christian to the heathen, and gave birth to the new foreign missionary movement that has set itself seriously to the task of the salvation of the unchristian world. It raised up the Wesleys to light the torch of New Testament religion in England. It caused the wave of revival that has swept over this country, in which Finney and Moody and scores of other evangelists have been preaching a practical New Testament gospel. It has passed into the regular pulpits of the land and given a new inspiration to every preacher of Christianity. More and more its power has extended to the educated elements of society

and has added a spiritual tone to culture. By direct activity and indirect influence, the newly discovered spirit of New Testament religion is changing the whole aspect of the Christian world.

Here is a profound and widespread popular recovery of the gospel, in its original spirit and practical purpose, due, not to dogmatic theology, but to two hundred years of the open Bible in the homes of the common people. The remnants of the ancient and mediæval theology mixed up with the movement are a source of weakness, and have been a hindrance. The movement has no coherent theology of its own. It is like the Lutheran Reformation in this respect, only that it has gone farther in breaking away from Catholic dogmatics. It is a *religious* revival, and its theology is a patchwork; many of its adherents do not know where the pieces came from, or why they are put together in one form rather than in another. It is a distinct return to the teachings of the New Testament, but these teachings are unconsciously woven together with the warp of post-biblical dogmatics. "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau": the gospel is the New Testament gospel, but the theology is that of an antiquated culture. Herein is brought to light the theological aspect that the Reformation has now assumed.

The scientific reopening of the Bible.

The theological implications of the nineteenth century Reformation become more apparent as we trace the second channel of Bible recovery. We turn from the popular world to the world of letters.

As soon as the new world-view that came in with the beginning of the modern era had gained a firm hold, and the new culture had acquired assured results, there began a warfare between the new culture and the old. Sometimes this took the form of a feeling of irritation toward surviving ideas, without a clearly defined consciousness of what the trouble was. Sometimes there was open antagonism. From the middle of the eighteenth century the conflict has been going on as a semi-philosophical, semi-literary, semi-critical movement, which is inextricably mixed up with the theological problem. English deism, French rationalism, German enlightenment, romanticism, and idealism could not be ignored if an attempt were here made to trace modern theological thought. But none of these helped directly to place Christianity on its historical foundations. The old theological entanglements still remained, either included in the movements themselves or tacitly attributed to the Christianity that they opposed. These, however, all helped on the spread of the new cul-

ture, and increased the growing alienation from Christianity on the part of educated people. The elements of ancient culture bound up in traditional theology came more and more to repel the man familiar with the new science and looking at the world in the new way.

Different classes of cultured people were affected in different ways.

There remained some, among them apparently the majority of professional theologians and religious teachers, who were more influenced by the dogmatic environment than by the atmosphere of modern life. They still lived in the old world of theological notions, and the new culture had not made enough impression upon them to cause them to realize the presence of any gulf between the two. They saw no "problem" peculiar to the new conditions, and stood confidently by traditional Christianity.

Another class, more deeply influenced by modern education, and feeling the uncongeniality of the ancient culture surviving in traditional theology, still realized so keenly the need and blessings of religion that they clung to Christianity, and lulled to sleep their rational powers in the religious realm. There are yet many such among us, strong religious natures, who think acutely enough about other subjects, while in matters pertaining to religion they do not pre-

tend to think. They hide behind the convenient plea of "mystery," without any suspicion that the mystery is often due, not to difficulties inherent in the gospel itself, but to the change in the world's thought which has made an obsolete extra-biblical theology unintelligible.

These two classes constituted the "orthodox" of the day — those who stood by Christianity according to the traditional dogmatic statements; not according to the New Testament, necessarily, for not this, but the creeds, whether written or unwritten, outside the New Testament or read into it, had been made the standard of orthodoxy.

Other people tried to hold Christianity intelligently as well as religiously, while still accepting modern thought, and found themselves between two fires. They gained only mental turmoil, alternating hope and despair, being one day full of intellectual doubt, the next giving play to the religious feelings; having just enough light to see the darkness, but not to dispel it — of all men most miserable.

Still others, in whom the literary and scientific element predominated over the religious, accepted the necessities of modern thought, and gave up Christianity; sometimes carelessly, sometimes, where the religious nature was deeper, in hopeless sadness and pathetic despair.

None of these four classes saw where the real difficulty lay. Orthodox and infidel alike regarded Christianity as being in truth the traditional thing which passed under that name in his own age. In this Voltaire and his orthodox antagonists were agreed. The old heresy was bearing fruit: Origen's theology was having an unexpected effect.

Still another class, represented by German idealism, culminating in Hegel, sought to escape by filling the old doctrines with a new meaning, and building up an elaborate speculative philosophy which should reconcile faith and reason; philosophy was religion intelligently thought out—the old Greek conception again.

Another school of thinkers, with philosophical sympathies akin to Kant, represented most prominently by Schleiermacher, and including the intuitionalists and romanticists, went to the other extreme, and declared that religion had nothing to do with science and philosophy, and was in no way dependent upon contemporary culture in any age, but belonged exclusively to the realm of feeling: "religion is the feeling of dependence."

Thus there was warfare in the world of thought, there was ferment everywhere, and still it was not perceived that the cause was a new world-view contending against the ancient culture surviving in Christian dogmatics.

It was under such conditions as these that, in the fourth decade of the last century, Christianity was rudely brought back to its historical foundations by the appearance of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, Baur's work on the pastoral epistles, and Vatke's history of the religion of the Old Testament. They burst like a bomb upon all camps of religious thought, and marked a new epoch for Christianity.

As with all apparently sudden movements, however, this one also was not so abrupt as appeared upon the surface. During the previous century Semler, Lessing, and Herder had enunciated the principle that the books of the Bible should be read and criticised as human productions; and from that time on the idea was never lost, but kept gaining ground. The transcendent importance of Strauss and Baur lay in the fact that they were the first to apply this idea systematically in an actual attempt to understand the historical life of Jesus and the historical conditions giving rise to the epistles. This significance which they had is entirely independent of the conclusions that they reached. Those conclusions are now almost universally rejected, but the idea and method of biblical investigation then introduced mark the beginning, and form the basis, of the modern science of biblical exegesis.

The new study of the Bible differs from the old in important particulars, and possesses characteristics peculiarly its own.

A new temper animates it. This point hardly needs to be discussed further. The same spirit that had turned from theories about nature to a study of nature herself here turns from notions about the Bible to the Bible itself. It attempts to lay aside preconceived ideas and dogmatic prejudices in an earnest and honest attempt to discover what it is that the Bible really means to say. Thus it inaugurated a biblical exegesis carried on solely in the interests of truth, and not for theological considerations; at least this is true in theory.

A different method also characterizes the new exegesis. The same scientific method that had gained an assured place and achieved such fruitful results in the study of nature is here applied to the study of the Bible. The allegorical interpretation that had been employed by Origen and the early church in general had continued to influence the study of the Bible up to the last century. It rendered any certain knowledge of Scripture teaching impossible. A Jewish rabbi once said that a lofty peculiarity of the Word of God was that it could have from five to nine different meanings, while the word of man, such was its poverty,

could have but one. As long as such a conception, or even the idea of a double meaning, vitiated exegesis, it is evident that there could be no fixed body of Bible knowledge. The choice between the five to nine meanings was determined by a man's dogmatic predilections. The new method does away with this persistent error. It starts out with the idea that the books of the Bible were produced under definite historical conditions, and were addressed to definite individuals and communities, with a definite meaning and for a specific purpose, generally without any reference whatever to a more remote future. God's message in the Bible to the future age depends upon the nature of the message to a given present, rather than upon the peculiarity of its transmission, the miraculousness of its prevision, or the multitudinousness of its meanings; and the way to learn the meaning of that message is first to find out definitely what the author meant to say to his contemporaries, and therein discover the universal gospel which the divine Author has given to all generations.

The new exegesis thus takes a different attitude toward the Bible. The old view had no sense of movement or particularity. The Bible was all on one level plane, as if complete inspiration meant absolute uniformity. Everything was of universal application unless it was proved

to be particular and local. Paul's letters, for instance, were regarded as general treatises for all Christians of all times, in their form of statement as well as in their underlying principles. This accounts for the discussions that have taken place about such an injunction as, "Let the women keep silence in the churches." It accounts also for the fact that theology has retained so much of Paul's Hebrew cast of thought. The new science breaks up this forced universality of application, and sees in the epistles local and particular injunctions, written to meet concrete needs. The presumption is that such is the case with any given passage in the Bible unless it can be shown to be of permanent validity, either in its existing form of statement or in the underlying principle. While the old exegesis, at least that of post-Reformation Protestantism, regarded the Bible as an infallible statute book, the new study, with its reconstruction of historical conditions, has discovered that it is a book of life rather than of law, a book of religion rather than of dogmatics, the constitution of the church rather than its specific legislation. It is the record of God's dealings with men for their salvation, and so we get back of the book to the living God behind it. In a word, the old exegesis was characteristically dogmatic, the new is characteristically historical and scientific.

This way of looking at the Bible does not at all deny the reality of its divine inspiration or the permanent value of its teaching, but makes it a book that is intended to be understood, instead of a collection of mysteries whose meaning is to be guessed at — understood, at least, so far as its profound truths may be grasped by human thought. The arbitrary hindrances to its understanding are removed.

The method of this scientific exegesis is beyond question, and is itself the most valuable result achieved, because it makes possible a progressingly definite knowledge of what the Bible teaches. The specific results hitherto worked out by the new method are not all fully established, and in some cases may be superseded, as have been the conclusions of Strauss and Baur. Yet not all of them. Sixty years of scientific work in this field have yielded unprecedentedly rich returns in assured Bible knowledge. It is worth noting, parenthetically, that one proof of this is the greater unity of the various evangelical denominations of Protestantism. They all profess to take their stand upon the Bible. As they have ceased to guess at its meaning and warp its teaching by dogmatic prejudices, and have honestly tried to find out what it says, the denominations that are loyal to the Bible have of necessity approached each other. Herein also

lies the hope and the prophecy of the coming union of Protestantism.

The general result of this literary and scientific reopening of the Bible has been a decided movement from traditional Christianity back to New Testament Christianity. It has therefore led to a striking recovery of the gospel. Going back of the long theological development to the perennial source of Christianity, we have found ourselves again in the religious atmosphere of the first century, and have felt again the mighty power of the giant young gospel moving out in sublime confidence against the world. We have lived once more in days when Christian thought was a part of Christian life and led it on. We have felt ourselves to be in the midst of religious realities instead of theological systems, and have rejoiced with the joy of the early Christians in a gospel that is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believeth. Perhaps more than we realize, this clear vision of the New Testament gospel has influenced all channels of present-day thought and life.

In this general movement back to New Testament Christianity one of the most noteworthy results has been the recovery of the historical Jesus and the consequent transfer of emphasis from the creeds to the Christ. The New Testament has been found to be full of Christ —his

powerful and persuasive personality, his wonderful redeeming love for men, his welcome disclosure of the Father's heart, his cheering presentation of a new life and the way to gain it; but no theological system explaining all this. The result was inevitable. The modern spirit, weary of metaphysical theories in religion, suspicious of a theology that was intertwined with scientific and philosophic conceptions which had already become effete, turned with joyous relief from mediæval Catholic dogmatics back to the historic life of the Man of Galilee. This person has not been philosophically defined to a full extent; indeed, there is not a consuming desire to define him. To know and love him is felt to be better. Men have turned from theories about him to the blessed reality of his presence and his power, and are content.[1]

The recovery of the gospel just described differs from the popular recovery referred to above in that this movement, having come through the channel of literary and scientific thought and criticism, is more conscious of what it is about, more scientific in its method, more intelligent in its conclusions, and more keenly sensible of the consequences involved.

For this reason the theological implications of the nineteenth century Reformation are more

[1] See Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi.

clearly apparent here than in the popular movement. Starting with a scientific study of the Christian sources, without any reference to dogmatic considerations, conclusions have been reached that have turned indifference to traditional dogmatics into antagonism. This has been due to the twofold reason that, on the one hand, the farther the new study of the Bible has proceeded, the more evident it has become that the traditional theological system not only is not found there, but actually does violence to the New Testament gospel; while, on the other hand, from the study of church history, the rise of this system, and the extra-biblical sources from which it largely drew its material, together with its varied fortune in the world, have been discovered in post-apostolic times. Among educated people who have gone to the New Testament for an acquaintance with Christianity at first hand, and who have acquired some accurate knowledge of what is there taught, there has consequently been a growing dissatisfaction with the traditional theological system that seems to them not to do justice at the present day to this New Testament gospel. Therefore, while the work of gospel recovery is destined to proceed still farther as the scientific study of the Bible continues, yet along with this activity the religious movement has now assumed a new phase — the theological.

In the open Bible the two streams of gospel recovery run into the same channel. But they cannot be said to blend. The one is still popular in character, intolerant of scientific difficulties, caring only for immediate practical issues, unfamiliar with the tortuous course of dogmatics in history, ready to put up with a heterogeneous theology that adopts here an element from the Bible, there one from Origen or Augustine, now another from Luther or Calvin, and then another from the post-Reformation systems, with yet another from the loose current notions of the day, still unconsciously reading the whole thing back into the Bible and bringing it forth again triumphantly as divine truth. There is no historical sense, no scientific exegesis. The gospel is still vitiated by being confused with its later theological expression. Hence, while many evangelistic workers preach Christianity with almost apostolic power, their theology shocks good taste and modern culture. They think the fault is with the taste and culture that have lost the relish for gospel truth. But it is not so. Gospel truth was never more welcome, and the effort to live it never stronger. The trouble is with this obsolete culture which they are presenting as an essential part of the gospel.

The other movement is still scientific and thoughtful, inclined to be contemptuous of the

popular confidence and enthusiasm, somewhat cold and lacking in evangelistic fervor, perhaps putting over-emphasis upon what it is possible for knowledge to do in religion, yet trying to be loyal to its scientific ideals and to keep reverent and sweet-spirited in the face of misunderstanding and abuse. It sees more clearly the seat of the difficulty, and feels more keenly the injustice of trying to force upon the modern world the ancient culture as a part of the religion of Jesus. It realizes more fully, and often more sadly, the inherent difficulty of interpreting religion to thought, but yet must have a thoughtful religion if it is to render whole-hearted allegiance.

The time has therefore come when we face the theological problem of the New Reformation. Will this rediscovered gospel be permitted to express itself in a systematic theology congruous with our modern culture, or will it again, as after the Lutheran Reformation, be forced back into the old wine-skin of ancient knowledge? If the latter, there is no alternative but for history to repeat itself—another period of ferment by the gospel in its hiding place, followed by a new bursting of its bonds some time in the future. If, on the other hand, the gospel can now express itself in a new and fitting dogmatic system, it will be free to enter upon a permanent conquest of the modern world—a conquest of its intelli-

gence and determined energy, as well as of its feeling and impulsive activity. The movement for the recovery of the gospel is passing, if indeed it has not already passed, into a movement for its restatement.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RECOVERED GOSPEL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It has been assumed in the foregoing pages that the gospel of Jesus was originally of a certain character; that it was a *pistis* rather than a *gnosis*, and so had to do most properly with man's religious nature. In a former chapter it has been shown what Christianity became within three centuries after the apostolic age. The ecclesiastical transformation therein described is all but universally admitted. The theological condition of things in the fourth century is now also too apparent to be longer disputed; Christianity had become a *gnosis*. It remains only to ascertain whether it was such also in the beginning, or whether the assumption that at first it was a *pistis* is well founded.

I. ATTITUDE OF MODERN EXEGESIS TOWARD THE NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

By common consent the nature of primitive Christianity is to be determined from the New Testament, which, whatever else it may be, is conceded by all parties to be, at least in the main, the literature of the first age of Christianity.

In turning now to the New Testament to answer the question, What was the original gospel? we today occupy a double vantage ground never before enjoyed. In the first place, the new study of church history, and the movement leading to the recovery of the Bible, as traced in the last chapter, bring us to the New Testament in a more intelligent and open-minded spirit, and equipped with a better exegetical method, than have characterized any other age.

In the second place, due to the new historical perspective in Bible study, we turn now, not primarily to the epistles of Paul, as has generally been done in the past, but to the New Testament records of the life and teachings of Jesus; and then to the other Bible writings as throwing new light upon these. Here we stand upon practically new ground, never before occupied since the New Testament canon was formed. By the time that was accomplished Christianity had already started on its theological course, and gave precedence to those parts of the Bible that were most easily assimilated to its uses. Hence the Greek theologians turned to the writings of John and the philosophical aspects of Paul's writings, while the Roman theologians found special delight in Paul's legal terminology. At the time of the Lutheran Reformation, also, it is significant that the return was rather to Paul's writings than to

the gospel narratives. Luther, instead of taking Jesus' idea of the forgiveness of sins as his dominating thought, made Paul's "justification by faith" the center of his system. Calvin, instead of putting new emphasis upon Jesus' conception of the fatherhood of God, adopted as the center of his system the absolute sovereignty of God, an idea traceable back through Augustine to Paul. From the Reformation this same tendency passed over into all the great Protestant systems of theology. The writings of Paul, rather than the teachings of Jesus, have dominated dogmatics all the way of its course. This in turn was justified by a theory of inspiration which regarded the apostles as the infallible mouthpieces of the risen Christ, and so made their utterances his.

A clearer understanding of New Testament times, and a more careful reading of the New Testament itself, show that this position is not tenable, and indeed is unscriptural. It places the apostles on the same footing as Christ, ascribing to them the same universality of comprehension and expression. No one who has entered at all deeply into the thought of the apostolic writers will deny for a moment their divine inspiration. But they are not as Christ. They have the same spirit, but not without measure. They were still human, with human limitations and prejudices. Christ spoke as knowing what was in man, and as

possessing immediate knowledge of the Father's heart. The apostles, according to their own confession, saw through a glass darkly. Jesus somehow spoke a universal religious language, not only to his own age, but to all generations. He did not argue, nor attempt to express his thought in terms of traditional Jewish theology; he lived the truth in his own divine life, and succeeded as none other ever has in speaking as soul to soul with man. With the apostles it was different. Their mission was to their own generation, and to us only as first to it. It was their avowed purpose to bring the gospel to bear upon the conditions immediately before them. They had no gospel of their own, but themselves took the gospel of Jesus, and by means of argument and illustration, drawn from current conceptions and conditions, sought to press it upon their contemporaries. That is, the apostles were the first theologians and preachers of the church, and are the inspired examples for all future workers in the same field. Doing as they did, we also refuse to stop with them, but press back to the same gospel of Jesus to which they gave allegiance.

For this reason the following exposition will be confined chiefly to the gospel narratives. This much, however, should be said: anyone who really works his way into apostolic thought becomes more and more convinced that the apostles

preached no new gospel, but grasped in all of its essential features the teaching of Him whom they served. The thing to be remembered is that their expression of this gospel does not partake of the same universal and permanent character as the gospel itself, for it was cast in the form it now has in order to meet special conditions. If this is borne in mind, the expression "the gospel of the New Testament" may be substituted for "the gospel of Jesus" throughout this discussion without change of meaning; it being understood that no attempt is here made to prove the essential identity of the two.

It is not necessary in this place to enter into a critical estimate of the four gospel narratives. It is assumed that the first three give a true impression of Jesus, together with a trustworthy account of what he did and taught. It is also taken for granted that the fourth gospel, even though it may color the thought of Jesus by the reflection of the author, is still true to the spirit and substance of the Master's teaching. These assumptions, to say the least, are not in contradiction to the most assured conclusions of the critical investigation of the subject.

II. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS.

No pretensions are made in the following pages to a scientific exposition of the gospel, but only to an indication of such of its charac-

teristic features as bear upon the question of the original character of Christianity.

The fundamental idea of the gospel of Jesus is that of salvation. It cannot be better expressed than in the classical passage: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Jesus of Nazareth the mediator of salvation.

Before his birth, Jesus was given a name which indicated the fact that he should save his people from their sins. At his nativity the angels announced the good tidings that a Savior was born. The aged saints waiting in the temple welcomed him as the Redeemer of Israel. These things, however, would not determine anything, if he himself had not made salvation his great task. This he did, both by word and by deed. "The whole need not a physician," said Jesus, "but the sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." He called himself the good shepherd, who watched over the sheep and protected them with his life. "I, if I be lifted up," he said, "will draw all men unto me." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "I am come," he said again, "that they might have life, and that they might

have it more abundantly." Then there is that great utterance, spoken when he was trying to impress upon his disciples the inherent nobility of service: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." And the solemn words at the Last Supper: "This is my body; this is my blood which is shed for many."

These were not idle words. His life proved their sincerity. He vindicated his claim to be the great Physician by healing the diseases of men, living with sinners, loving and helping them, even until it became a great scandal among the Pharisees. He identified himself so fully with men in their sufferings that the evangelist saw in his life the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." But all other proof of Jesus' claim to be the Savior of men is overshadowed by the convincing proof of the cross. Here he sealed his professions by actual death in behalf of mankind. The world's sickness and sorrow and sin, which he bore through life, he bore unto the utmost limit in his death.

While this central fact in the life of Jesus cannot be permitted to be buried under man-made theories of the atonement, yet it is also true that the gospel fact cannot be limited to what the eye can see. As Jesus hung upon the cross, all that

could be seen was a man dying between two other men. Fact means more than this. Who it was dying, and how he came to be dying, are a part of the fact. It cannot be denied that fact and theory here come so close together that the one easily passes into the other. The safest thing to do is to include in the permanent gospel fact of the person of Christ what he himself included.

Even in the synoptic gospels Jesus represents himself as bearing a unique relation to God. God is pre-eminently his Father. He will confess men before his Father, who has delivered all things unto him and given him all authority in heaven and earth. "No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." The Father has committed the judgment of the world unto the Son, who will come in his glory to accomplish it. Jesus knows himself to be the Christ, the chosen and anointed agent of the Father for setting up the kingdom of God among men.

When we turn to the fourth gospel, this is made more distinct. The consciousness of his intimate union with the Father is so strong that it colors all his life. He everywhere refers to "my Father" as the one whose messenger he is.

He speaks not on his own authority, he does not his own works, he carries not out his own will; but he is sent of the Father, does his will and works, speaks the things he has seen and heard of him. He was with the Father in his glory before he came to earth, and goes again to be with him. He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father. Indeed, he and the Father are one.

It is this unique relationship to the Father that gives character and value to the work of Jesus. Knowing God by immediate union, he could make him known as the Father of men. Having personally experienced the Father's infinite love, he could express it to the world in his own person. Understanding God's deadly antagonism to sin, he could teach men its real nature by resisting it even unto death, and causing it there to reveal its incarnate essence. The gospel records leave no doubt of the fact that Jesus regarded himself as the self-revelation of God. John gives the thought in his prologue by saying that he was the Word of God incarnate — God's expression of himself in humanity. Jesus claims to have for men the religious value of God. It is through him that we have our most treasured knowledge of God and come into communion with him. This claim of Jesus is presented everywhere throughout the New Testa-

ment; and, it may be added, is abundantly verified in human experience. This relationship to God is the gospel fact concerning the person of Jesus that makes the salvation which he brings to men a real salvation.

God the Heavenly Father the Author of salvation.

The gospel presents a new idea of God. He is not only a God of holiness and justice, but also of boundless love; not a God who loves Jews alone, nor the good alone, but whose love is all-inclusive, as extensive as humanity itself. Whether or not Jesus taught that God is the Father of all men, he certainly taught that he has a Father's love and care for all. It was God's love that led to Christ's mission of salvation: "God so loved the world that he gave his Son." As Paul puts it: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God is forever working to reclaim the lost world; his love streams out constantly as the warm rays of the sun. He showers blessings upon the just and the unjust, that he may do them good. His thought for men is good and only good; if there is any failure to receive eternal blessedness, it will be through man's sin, not by God's wish. With Jesus the cross is thus the manifestation of the Father's deathless love, rather than the satisfaction of the justice of a

wrathful God. This may not be Calvinism, but it is the message of Jesus nevertheless.

The nature and conditions of salvation.

This salvation, of which God is the author and Jesus the mediator, is presented in a somewhat different aspect in the synoptic gospels from that in the fourth gospel; the former representing it as the kingdom of God, and the latter as eternal life. A closer examination, however, shows this to be a formal rather than a material difference.

1. Salvation as the kingdom of God. The idea of the kingdom of God was not a new one. Israel theoretically constituted such a kingdom, both during the theocracy, when God was regarded as the nation's ruler, and during the monarchy, when the king was God's earthly vicegerent. The Jews of later ages looked back longingly to the kingdom of David as the ideal condition to be reproduced under the coming Messianic reign. Jesus adopted this national hope of the kingdom, and made it the central thought of his preaching. He began with the proclamation: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." He went throughout the cities and villages preaching the kingdom of God during his entire ministry. He directed his disciples to preach the same theme. And during the forty days after his resurrection "he was speaking the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

But while Jesus chose this national hope as the form into which he cast his message, he filled it with new meaning and wholly changed its character. It is not necessary to discuss here the Jewish expectations concerning the kingdom. Their essentially materialistic character in the times of Christ is well known. On the other hand, he gave to the idea a clearly marked spiritual meaning. When the Pharisees came asking him when the kingdom of God should appear, he answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you," or "in the midst of you." The kingdom, that is, is a spiritual kingdom, not coming with worldly pomp and force, but already present in unseen spiritual power. It is the sovereign rule of God in the lives of men, both as individuals and as related to each other.

All those who enter into the kingdom, therefore, must turn from their old life and be of a new spiritual temper. "Repent, and believe the gospel," says Jesus. "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the meek, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

As men enter the kingdom by the exercise of repentance and faith, God meets them with the forgiveness of their sins, dispelling their fear of

him, and drawing them into personal fellowship with himself. This salvation into the kingdom thus involves a new life of communion with God. It is a life of trust, in which men cease to trouble themselves overmuch with anxiety about food and raiment and the evils of the morrow, but strive to do their Father's will first of all, and leave themselves in his care. The sovereignty in the kingdom is a "paternal sovereignty," in which the king is a loving Father, looking after the best interests of each child.

While God is supreme in the kingdom, as loving, forgiving, and sustaining Father, he makes his will known through Christ, the Savior, Master, and Friend, to whom immediate allegiance is due. Every man who enters is to deny himself and take up his cross and follow Jesus. This is not a mechanical matter. Jesus has adopted as his own the law of the kingdom, and fulfilled it in his own life, even unto crucifixion. Everyone who would enter must adopt the same law and fulfil it in the same way. The law of the kingdom is love — not love along with other laws, but love as the all-inclusive principle of life which fulfils all other laws. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." And at the end of the ministry it was the same as at the beginning. In those last days at Jerusalem

Jesus answered the lawyer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." Nor is this law of love to govern the subject's relations with his friends alone. He is to love his enemies, bless those that curse him, do good to those that hate him, and pray for those that despitefully use him and persecute him. Toward friend and enemy alike the spirit of kindliness is to rule.

This love, moreover, is not to remain an unexpressed benevolent impulse, but is to take form in word and deed. The cup of cold water is to be given, the naked clothed, the sick and unfortunate visited, the sorrowing comforted. "Whosoever *shall lose* his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall find it." Paul sums it up in the spirit of the Master when he says: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Salvation in the kingdom necessitates the overcoming of sin and the living of lives of purity and holiness. The law of love necessarily must overcome the law of selfishness, which Jesus everywhere presents as the essence of sin. The greatest sin is lack of love. Hence as men come

more and more under the dominion of the law of the kingdom they must grow in holiness. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," is the divine ideal ever leading the king's subjects on to holier living. Sin has no place in the kingdom. If it enters it is an element of discord and must be thrust out. Nor is holiness mere passive or negative goodness, but active and energetic righteousness. This is one of the remarkable things about Jesus' idea of goodness. It is the very opposite of stoicism and asceticism. It invites men to enter into life's activities and conquer evil by overcoming it with good. Sin is not the doing of evil so much as the failure to do the good. Virtue is not the absence of the wrong so much as the existence and activity of positive goodness. In the kingdom of God sin is to give place to this kind of holiness.

The new life in the kingdom of God begins here in this world; that is, the kingdom of God is a present kingdom. It already "is among you." In the days of Jesus the kingdom was established in the world, when through him God began to exercise his sovereign rule over individual hearts. But this was not all of the kingdom. It was to extend its sway both individually and socially. Like the leaven, the new law of the kingdom was to permeate more and more the life of the individual who had felt its

power, until he came completely under its control, and sin gave place to holiness as selfishness gave way before the new divine altruism. This may not be fully accomplished in the earthly life; indeed, it probably will not be. And so there is in store for the individual subject of the kingdom a glorious consummation in the future, wherein his longings and strivings shall be realized. Some time, somewhere, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

But the thought of Jesus seems also to anticipate the leavening extension of the kingdom's law into the social life of the world. Beginning with individual subjects, and always preserving the individual dignity and the individual relationship between Son and Father, the kingdom also includes the relation of individuals to each other, and the penetration of the divine sovereignty into their collective life. It therefore involves a new society, whose laws are fair deductions of the great law of the kingdom, and whose institutions are just expressions of its spirit. Jesus did not say much about how this should be accomplished. There are the two parables of the leaven and the mustard seed which directly teach it. But more than that, it seems to be involved in all his teaching concerning the relation of the subjects of the kingdom to God and to each other. Supreme love to God, and a love to others equal to love

for self, necessarily must in time find expression in congenial social institutions. It can hardly be doubted that Jesus looked forward to the course of history as the scene of this conflict between the old world-kingdom and the new divine kingdom which he had established; a conflict in which his kingdom should be progressively victorious until its final glorious consummation, represented by his return in the glory of the Father to an undisputed reign.

2. Salvation as eternal life. Turning from the synoptics to the fourth gospel, we do not find a different message, but an entirely new form of expression. Whether this is due to John's own reflection and personal coloring, or whether Jesus used both forms, the synoptists mainly following one and John the other, is a matter of conjecture. However that may be, it is surprising how impossible one finds it to express the teachings of John's gospel under the categories derived from an analysis of the first three gospels. A wholly different terminology has to be used. But it is even more surprising how little real change is found in the gospel message presented in these two forms. The shell seems to fall away in both cases and leave the same kernel of divine truth manifest in clearest light.

The gospel of salvation which the synoptists

present under the form of the kingdom of God John presents as eternal life.

That which the synoptists hint at is here clearly expressed — that man must undergo a spiritual birth and emerge into spiritual life if he would see God. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. This spiritual birth is conditioned by the same requirements that the synoptists give for entrance into the kingdom, and this is doubtless one cause of the similarity of thought between the two. These conditions are repentance (a turning from sin) and faith in Christ (loving confidence and trust in him, together with the will to obey him). Upon the fulfilment of these conditions the Father forgives men their sins, gives them power to become sons of God, and grants to them eternal life.

Here is brought out more clearly, also, what it is that man is saved from: sin and death and the wrath of God. This does not need to be enlarged upon, as the same teaching is found in the synoptists. But naturally an emphasis of the gospel as life and light brings out more clearly the shadows of death.

We likewise see with greater distinctness what it is that man is saved unto: a life of light and of blessed union and fellowship with God. "I will not leave you comfortless," says Jesus, "I will

come to you." "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "Abide in me, and I in you." "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Life and light are the great gifts of God to those who fulfil the conditions of their bestowal through Jesus Christ.

This new divine life must be sustained by continued loyal fellowship with Christ, who is the bread of life; a communion whose continuance is rendered possible after his departure by his return in the Spirit to dwell within his people as comforter, strengthener, and guide.

A man thus born of the Spirit, and living in the Spirit, has eternal life. He has it now: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." There is not so much said about the present and future in John's gospel. They seem to disappear as Christ leads us out into the eternal verities where time is not. The man who through faith in Christ is brought into a permanent relation to God in the realm of spiritual life comes into an environment where the conditions of eternal life are already present. He is in vital touch with those mighty spiritual forces which are as strong and enduring as God himself. He is taken up by God into his own life, without losing his own individuality; rather he there first finds it completely.

John does not show, as the synoptists do, how this life is to come into organic relations with the world, and constitute a kingdom, but deals with it in its inner, spiritual, eternal conditions. The atmosphere is more distinctively religious as contrasted with moral. He gives the spirit and essence of religion as taught by Christ, without attempting to give it a local habitation and a name. But it is the same gospel of salvation, here brought out with startling clearness and beauty.

III. CONCLUSIONS.

It now remains to consider the bearing of this New Testament idea of Christianity upon the question of the obscuration of the gospel, with which we have been concerned. Was the later dogmatic development the legitimate unfolding of this gospel, or a transformation of it?

1. The New Testament narratives set forth the gospel under the two aspects of the kingdom of God and eternal life. From this fact several things are obvious. In the first place, the gospel message is thus better understood. Language is a means to an end. The end sought is the conveyance of truth. But language is an inadequate means of communication, and hence a truth presented in only one form is subject to more misconception than when expressed in several ways. Without question the dual form in which

the gospel has come down to us makes its meaning clearer.

Again, it is evident even here that the gospel is not to be identified with, or confined to, any one form of expression. It would seem as if in the very beginning Jesus sought to guard against that error. And if the gospel cannot be identified with any one form of expression even as taught by Christ, much less should we feel bound by the more local form in which Paul set it forth; and still less by the expression given to it by theologians and councils who formulated their statements in the midst of passionate controversy, in times remote from Bible days, surrounded by an alien culture, and often with no clear conception of the essential gospel message.

But of still greater importance than either of these is the further consideration that the terminology which Jesus used is best adapted to express the real nature of the gospel clearly and universally. The two forms of expression that he adopted are marked by especial richness, and bring the gospel into touch with all life. It is significant that he did not use the philosophical language of formal thought, nor the legal terminology of his day, nor the speech of contemporary literary and scientific culture, but the two categories of life and a paternal kingdom.

The terms of life are as universal as the human

race, and are full of the wealth of meaning that pertains to life in all of its manifoldness. Perhaps we might say that Christianity is life—the only true life. Even under the guise of the kingdom of God, the gospel appears as life in the kingdom. The adoption of this terminology for the proclamation of the gospel, therefore, brings to light its inner nature as a vital union of the spiritual man with the universal Spirit, and makes this conception everywhere intelligible.

But this is not all of the gospel. Religion, at least the Christian religion, is not adequately defined by calling it the life of the soul in communion with God. It has earthly relationships and everyday duties. In expressing these also Jesus chose a terminology at once universal and fitted to manifest clearly their character. He took the mingled concepts of the family and the kingdom. Everywhere there is some sort of community life under one or both of these aspects; and this renders universally intelligible the social teachings of the gospel as set forth by Jesus.

Thus wherever the gospel goes the conceptions are already prepared for teaching it in its original form of statement—and for teaching it in the most practical way, by bringing it into immediate touch with those phases of life which it must most influence if it remains true to its mission.

2. But back of terminology, the foregoing exposition settles the more important question of the true nature of the gospel of Jesus, and makes it certain that this is not chiefly a matter of knowledge. The conclusions reached in chap. ii, based upon the assumption that the original gospel was a religious message, are now proved to be true by an examination of the New Testament itself. In this new light they may well be reviewed and reinforced here.

That the New Testament gospel was primarily a religious message will be apparent from a consideration of the two conditions of salvation on the human side—repentance and faith.

It is here evident, without question, that Christianity is not divorced from knowledge. Repentance is primarily a change of mind. There is a new way of thinking. Faith, likewise, is based upon an intellectual conviction that Jesus is what he claims to be, and that what he says is trustworthy. But this is not all there is to repentance and faith, nor the chief part. The change of mind in repentance is a change respecting moral issues —a changed attitude toward God, a forsaking of sin, a new ideal of living. It necessarily involves, therefore, an incidental change of feeling and a fundamental change of will. To repent, in the New Testament sense, is to turn one's whole nature, in-

tellectual, emotional, and volitional, away from sin, toward righteousness and God. So also faith is chiefly a religious rather than an intellectual act. While the mind must be sufficiently satisfied to give it confidence, yet there remains a distinctively religious act of trust upon the basis of this confidence, and a moral act of obedience upon the basis of the confidence and trust; the whole colored by a feeling of joy at a course of life in line with the dictates of conscience. All of this is involved in New Testament faith. It is therefore an act of the entire religious nature—a resting in confident trust upon God as revealed by Jesus Christ, and a joyful willingness to do his will.

The object of faith, moreover, is also religious in character, being either Christ or God or the gospel. Faith is sometimes directed toward one of these, and sometimes toward another. Eventually it includes them all. But Christian faith has to do with these things as Christ represents them, and that is invariably as religious objects. God, according to Jesus, is not so much a metaphysical being, to be intellectually believed in, as he is the heavenly Father who cares for his children and would save them from the blight and curse of sin, and who is therefore to be trusted and loved. Jesus presents himself as the object of faith, not in the character

of a metaphysical Christology, founded upon the Greek doctrine of the Logos, but as a personal sympathizing human and divine Savior, clothed with the authority and saving power of God. We are saved by faith in Christ, not by belief in Christology. The other object of faith, the gospel, Jesus always represents as a message of salvation, not as a theory of salvation elaborated into a theological creed. The gospel message is, in a sentence, that God still loves men, and is both willing and able to forgive their sins and save them from sin, as soon as they make it possible for him to do so by repenting and returning to him through his Son Jesus Christ, whom he has sent into the world as his anointed representative. This is a religious message. It does not depend for its value upon being expressed in an intellectual creed which shall give a true explanation of how salvation is accomplished. It lies back of all theories, in the very nature of God and man and sin, and has been wrought into the historical life of the world by the earthly work of Jesus. Man's theory about it may legitimately be presented in a theology; but that theology is not the gospel message itself, and hence not the object of faith. This religious and moral character of the object of faith reacts, in turn, upon the act of faith, making even the intellectual element therein con-

tained belong to the jurisdiction of the conscience, rather than of the speculative reason.

Both the nature of repentance and the nature and objects of faith, therefore, make it evident that the gospel is addressed primarily to man's religious and moral nature, and so belongs most distinctively to the realm of the conscience, the feeling, and the will.

This fact is still further established by other teachings of Jesus.

In John 7:17 Jesus says: "If any man willeth to do his [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." In John 8: 31, 32, he says: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." In both of these passages the truth of the gospel is declared to be that which is known by obedience. Now, what kind of truth can be so known: scientific truth, such as a knowledge of whether the sun revolves around the earth, or of how many ages the earth required to reach its present geological condition; philosophical truth, such as will satisfy one with reference to the validity of the doctrine of evolution; historical truth, that will establish the facts concerning the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; theological truth, that will settle the questions of the Trini-

ty, the infallibility of Scripture, and the doctrine of the atonement? Everyone knows that Jesus had in mind no such questions of scientific and speculative import. Truth does not belong exclusively to the intellectual realm. The highest truth does not belong there. Without question Jesus refers to what we may call life-truth, or religious truth—truth that clarifies the conscience, quickens the sympathies, directs and strengthens the will; the kind of truth that has to do with the consciousness of sin, repentance of sin, trust in God, and freedom from sin. Indeed, that is what he goes on to say: "The truth shall make you free;" it being plain from the succeeding discussion that he means free from sin.

This kind of truth cannot be known by a purely intellectual act, but can be appropriated only by the whole rational, religious, and moral nature of man. No intellectual acceptance of a body of knowledge can make a man free from sin; but only the activity of the will, whereby he works himself progressively free from sin in a life of obedience to moral truth, which, in turn, he progressively apprehends by loving loyalty to Christ, through whom, again, God enters into his life to help.

Christ everywhere emphasizes this. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Whosoever shall *do the will* of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." In ending the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: "He that heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them" shall be secure. Again he says: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them." In the judgment scene recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, Christ pronounces sentence on the ground of what is done and left undone. This has always been a great grief to theology, which pronounces judgment on the basis of what is believed or disbelieved. But theology here has unquestionably departed from Christ. However we may try to get around it, and make salvation a matter of intellectual belief, Jesus universally presents it as due to an activity of the will toward God and the right, which God responds to with the power that guarantees success. There is no real salvation except a practical moral and religious freedom from sin, won through the truth, in the sphere of actual life. This, of course, does not deny God's co-operation and Christ's atonement, but rather is based upon these. Nor does it deny the saving efficacy of faith; but proves that faith and belief, in the sense in which the latter has come to be used, are not synonymous. Paul sums up the whole matter in the spirit of the

Master when he says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure."

In another place Jesus declares himself to be the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by him. The kind of truth that could be incarnated in Jesus is the distinctive truth of the gospel. Instances might be multiplied, but it is unnecessary. From what has already been said it is sufficiently evident that Jesus regarded his gospel as primarily a religious message, rather than as a new body of intellectual knowledge.

If we turn now from the words of Jesus to the apostolic writings, we find the same teaching concerning this matter.

Paul writes to the church at Corinth: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

"Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual." "The word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God." "Where is the wise? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching [Greek, 'the thing preached'] to save them that believe. Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." "Christ sent me, to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void."

Again, writing to Timothy, after warning him to avoid profitless discussions, Paul says: "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." And in writing to Titus he gives explicitly the things that he regards as befitting sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience. He goes on to give

other similar directions, ending with the exhortation to look for the blessed hope of the appearing of Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto himself. These are the things that Titus is to teach and exhort. The conception of what constitutes gospel truth is evident. In his wonderful eulogy of love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul says: "Love never faileth: whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; for we *know in part.* Now *abideth faith, hope, love.*" He surely did not regard the essence of the gospel as consisting in that which he declared to be partial and transitory. It was to be sought rather in the permanent qualities of religious truth.

From these passages, and many others, it is clear that Paul, in spite of the fact that he began the dogmatic process by explaining the gospel of Jesus to the existing thought of his day, did not regard the gospel as being a theological body of knowledge, but as a salvation from sin, or a new way of righteousuess, through the power of God, appropriated by the faith of man. Not knowledge, but faith, saves a man. And with Paul, as with Christ, faith is a matter of the whole moral and religious nature, including confidence and trust in Christ, love for him, and the practical activity of the will in loyalty to him.

In the other New Testament writers we find some very instructive passages in corroboration of this position.

John gives two remarkable definitions of God. Recall for a moment the Nicene idea of God, with its metaphysical subject-matter and philosophical terminology. Recall the history of the doctrine of God down through the centuries, with its wearisome speculative discussions of a metaphysical essence. Then turn back to John and read his two great declarations: "God is light;" "God is love." We come into an entirely different atmosphere. While not needing to deny that there is a metaphysical truth about God, we realize that the highest and most important truth concerning him is of a religious kind. Light and love cannot be known by intellectual processes; only the theory of them can be so understood. But that is comparatively a small matter. The man who is truly orthodox in his treatment of light and love is not he who accepts a given scientific theory concerning them, but he who takes a right attitude toward them in his living, and uses them as he ought. No more can the Christian God be known through intellectual processes. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Here also the truly orthodox man is not the one who subscribes to a given theological theory of God, but the one who takes a right attitude toward

him, and lives as he ought in view of the fact that there is such a God. The church has no right to make orthodoxy depend upon a given intellectual theory of God, such, for instance, as the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, however true it may be. According to the New Testament, God is pre-eminently an ethical being; orthodoxy is primarily a matter of right relationships with him.

In another place John says: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"—not knowledge, but faith. One knowledge might succeed another forever and the world remain unconquered, because knowledge does not possess overcoming power. Such power pertains only to faith. In similar spirit, Jude exhorts "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." And even if the expression "the faith" is here used to designate the whole body of apostolic teaching, it still is distinctively a faith and not a system of theological knowledge. It was not called "the faith" in apostolic times without good reason. The meaning is plain from the first part of the verse: "While I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Jude is talking about the kind

of faith that has to do with the "common salvation." The latter part of this passage is often quoted in defense of a theological system that came into existence centuries afterward. Rightly used, it condemns the pretensions of that theology to be a necessary part of the gospel, both because the system is a knowledge rather than a faith, and because it was not once for all delivered unto the saints by Christ, but was worked out by a later set of saints on their own responsibility. It is the New Testament faith that is to be contended for—the faith upon which depends "our common salvation."

The whole New Testament, therefore, is in perfect agreement that the gospel is not a new body of knowledge constituting a revealed philosophy. There is without doubt theological material within the New Testament itself, and likewise theological speculation. But there is not nearly so much "theology," nor is it so "systematic" as has often been assumed; most of it has been read back into the book from later days; and what little theological speculation there is, is marked by a different spirit and aim from that of later times—it is always made subservient to practical religion. In the main, the New Testament contents itself with presenting the Christian facts, and ethical deductions from those facts. This is what it means by "doctrine;" that is, "teaching."

It makes little or no attempt to explain the Christian facts by a coherent theory, as is done by theology, properly so called. It is everywhere a book of religion, and consistently presents the gospel throughout as a new religious and moral salvation.

Now the later dogmatic development transferred the gospel from this religious domain of the conscience and the will to the realm of the speculative reason; or, to say the very least that can be said, it came so near doing this that it changed the former proportion, vastly overemphasized the speculative intellectual aspects of truth at the cost of those having to do with the conscience and the will, and thereby fundamentally obscured the essential nature of the gospel and changed the whole course of its history in the world.

The claim that this development is necessary for the completeness of Christianity, or even that it is the legitimate continuation of the gospel, is entirely without foundation, and is contrary to reason. The gospel was complete as it left the lips of its divine Founder. It is a strange conception of Jesus that holds otherwise. He knew what his message was, and he preached it, and preached all of it. The later theological process, instead of being the logical and necessary continuation of that gospel, was a

distinct change from the language of life used by Jesus to the language of formal philosophical thought which he avoided as being inadequate for his purposes. The expression of the gospel in this language is not, and cannot be, so complete and satisfactory as was its presentation in the rich and universal language of life that Jesus chose. The terms of thought change with men's changing apprehension of truth; the terms of life remain essentially the same from age to age. Thought is only a part of man; life includes all of his interests—it takes in his thinking and feeling and willing, and everything connected with his entire being and activity. How instinct with life is the gospel as Jesus preached it! There are the birds of the air and the growing lilies; the ever-living springs and the waving grain; the faithful shepherd careful for his flock, and the husbandman solicitous for his crops; the wayward son, and the grief-stricken father; the awakening conscience and the developing will; deadliest hate and tenderest love. Jesus' gospel pulsates with life and life's manifold interests.

To turn from this and identify the gospel with thought, or even to express it exclusively or chiefly in terms of thought, is fatally to restrict it and remove it from its most legitimate and influential realm of operation. While not divorced from speculative truth in its proper place

and proportion, the gospel nevertheless is chiefly concerned with that religious truth which has to do with the mighty forces of right and wrong that govern the destiny of the world, and upon a man's practical attitude toward which his own destiny depends.

Thus the answer to the question, What is the original gospel in its essential nature? is clear and emphatic. The gospel is not confined within an earthly institution guarded by a privileged priesthood, upon which men are dependent for salvation, nor is it a theological body of knowledge, to be intellectually subscribed to. To be a Christian does not mean, nor involve, the acceptance of the extra-biblical dogmatics of the church, with its included elements of an obsolete culture. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, mediated by Jesus Christ; a salvation addressed to man's whole nature, and claiming jurisdiction over his entire life. To be a Christian is for a man so to turn from sin and surrender himself to Jesus Christ in confident trust and loyal allegiance that Christ can bring him into vital touch with the forces of spiritual life that have their source in God, and so assure to him the blessings of salvation. This is the recovered gospel of the New Testament.

PART II
THE RESTATEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER I.

THE GOSPEL AND THEOLOGY.

HITHERTO the discussion has hinged upon the question of the true nature of the gospel. We have seen how Christianity suffered a radical eclipse during the first centuries of its historical development by the change of its dominating principle from faith to knowledge, which removed it from the religious realm to the sphere of speculative philosophy. We have also seen how the original gospel has been recovered by a historical movement still in progress, in which the modern reality-loving spirit has returned to the New Testament as it was written, freed from the dogmatic system read back into it from the later development. What the gospel of Jesus is ought by this time to be unmistakably clear: it is a salvation from sin, mediated from God to men by Jesus Christ, and expressing itself in a new divine life of faith, dominated by the law of love. The first part of our task is completed with this rediscovery of the real nature of the gospel.

The further problem of the restatement of this gospel in such terms as will appeal to modern

thought and at the same time do justice to the gospel itself now requires attention.

Inasmuch as the eclipse of the gospel was intimately connected with its theological statement, it has seemed to be helpful in the foregoing treatment, if not indeed absolutely necessary, to consider somewhat the relations of the gospel and theology. It is worth while, however, to gather up the fragments that have been scattered here and there, and to discuss more fully and systematically this important subject, even though it may involve some repetition of what has already been said. The preliminary questions connected with the relation of the gospel to theology will be considered in this chapter, leaving the subsequent one for a suggested theological restatement.

I. THE NATURE OF THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT.

"Theology" and "Christianity" are not synonymous terms, unless "Christianity" is used in the sense of the historical system existing in a given age. At any rate "theology" and "the gospel" are not synonymous. The gospel is primary; theology is secondary. The gospel is not a theory, nor a thought, but a life and an experience. As such it is related both to God and to men, affects all human interests, and permeates every department of human activity.

Theology is only the theory of this gospel-life —its expression in terms of thought, and for thought purposes. Christian theology is therefore the science of the gospel of Jesus.

It is here as in the realm of nature. The independent, already existing world of life is primary, and the science of biology is the attempt to discover its laws and express them for the use of man's intelligence. In the religious realm the divine life in and through Jesus Christ is the primary reality, given by God; and the science of theology seeks to discover its nature, laws, presuppositions, and results, and then to express these in terms of systematic thought. Biology is not natural life; theology is not spiritual life. Life, both natural and spiritual, is independent of the science of life. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born"—whether of nature or of the Spirit. Life is here, coming from regions beyond man's vision. By faith we say it comes from God. But it is independent of man; his science of it can neither create nor destroy it. The most and best that he can do is to take it as it is, observe the laws of its operation, and put himself into harmony with them. In this way he may add to the sum of his own life, by enjoying it in

greater fulness and perfection. He may even learn enough of its real nature to understand something of its mysterious past and to prophesy its future. But that is all: man, in his thought, can only follow on to understand the life which God himself has created. This is as true in religion as it is in nature. Theology is neither more nor less than the science of the Christian life, the spiritual life of God which was expressed in Christ Jesus, and through him to men and in men. Here theology finds its subject-matter, and beyond this, with its necessary premises and conclusions, it may not go.

From these considerations it is evident that the first duty of theology is the explication of the Christian faith, and not of something outside of that faith. To this faith it must not add, from this faith it dare not subtract; its sole business is to set it forth clearly in terms intelligible to thought. Theology is not the proud mistress of all the sciences; it is only the humble servant of the Christian religion. It will do well to curtail its ancient pretensions and give its energies to its own great field of work. It is not the business of theology to formulate a philosophy of heaven and earth, except so far as this is involved in the Christian faith. That faith can live side by side with many systems of philosophy. Some it must doubtless exclude, because they involve teachings

antagonistic to its own fundamental principles; but it does not need to confine itself to any one philosophical system. Theology has fulfilled its mission when it has done justice to the gospel of Jesus Christ by setting it forth honestly and clearly in a systematic form, according to the best light of the age in which and to which it speaks.

While the Christian faith itself forms the subject-matter of theology, this involves presuppositions and produces results which are of great importance in the thought-relations of the gospel. These also it is the duty of systematic theology to elucidate. Given the historical Jesus, his life and teachings, how must we of necessity think of this Jesus in order to account for his influence in the world? What manner of man was he? What relation does he sustain to God and to the world? We know of Jesus chiefly through the New Testament writings. How are we to regard these? What is their relation to the Old Testament? Just how does the Bible stand related to Christianity? Jesus told of God. How must we think of God in order to do justice to Jesus' thought? Then there is man himself; what kind of a being is he, in the light of Christ's relation to human nature, and his redemptive work? These questions take us into the thick of the world's intel-

lectual battle. Someone has said that the coming conflict of Christianity is to be along the line of the Christian presuppositions. Whether this is true or not, theology certainly must deal with these questions. It should be remembered, however, that they are always to be treated in the light of the Christian facts, not for outside speculative purposes. Given the gospel facts, what made them possible? Theology must not depart here from the historical foundations of Christianity.

Christianity involves likewise certain consequences for the individual, for the church, and for the world—consequences not directly explained in the gospel message itself. A long course of history has produced results due directly or indirectly to the gospel. How are we to regard these in the light of the Christian facts? What new light do they shed upon the nature of the gospel? Much that was vague and uncertain at the beginning has been made plain by the interpretation of history. We cannot, if we would, go back to the gospel exactly as it was in the first century. It is absolutely necessary for us to take it now in the light of its historical life in the world. Theology must reckon with these consequences of the Christian faith and give to them their valuation.

Here again, in the presuppositions and conse-

quences of the Christian faith, we see the need of distinguishing between the gospel and theology. Salvation does not depend upon the solution of these questions. They affect only the intellectual aspects of the matter, and have chiefly an apologetic value. The solution reached in one age may be entirely unsatisfactory to the thought of another. The conclusions of any age are tentative and partial. These speculative deductions should not be bound upon the gospel with adamantine fetters. Men ought to be left free to accept the gospel salvation and to reject any or all human explanations of its presuppositions and consequences.

II. THE VALUE OF THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT.

We are now ready to ask: What is the value of theology?

1. That question can best be answered by first considering what value it does not possess. Theology cannot save sinners. This is evident from its nature as the science of Christian life. Theology can produce spiritual life no more than biology can produce natural life. Spiritual life is the gift of God: ye must be born from above, of the Spirit. The most that theology can do is, by setting forth the laws of life, to make plain the conditions upon which God bestows this supreme gift. It cannot give men power to comply

with those conditions, nor furnish the motive for doing so.

This leads, although perhaps somewhat as a digression here, to important considerations concerning how Christianity is to be propagated. It is a mistake to suppose that this is to be done chiefly by the preaching of theology. Theology at best is man's wisdom. And it is as true today as in Paul's time that "preaching should not be in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Theology is only the expression of the gospel to the intellectual part of man, while the gospel itself more truly appeals to the conscience and the will. So it happens that a man might preach theology for years and really preach very little gospel, at most only its intellectual aspects. In a recent criticism of new theology it was declared that, if the old theology was to be given up, preaching would have to cease until the new theology was worked out; that ministers would meantime have to "remain in theological quarantine." "What are our progressive preachers meanwhile to preach?" is asked with solicitude. There is no difficulty in answering that question, if we discriminate properly, and realize that theology, old or new, is not Christianity, but merely somebody's

attempted explanation of it, and therefore has no saving power. If the explanation of a past age has ceased to be satisfactory to these ministers, let them leave theology out for a time, while it is undergoing repairs, and preach New Testament Christianity. Possibly the church may not be the loser by the change. At least we have good precedent in that early period of Christianity before the rise of systems of theology, when the church was so marvelously successful in its work of evangelization. Great revivals are not due to an infallible theology in which the preacher feels unshaken confidence, but to a faithful and confident preaching of Jesus Christ, and to the power of the Holy Spirit. Where these conditions are met revivals have come in spite of poor theology quite as often, perhaps, as by the aid of good theology. Effective preaching is, indeed, impossible without positive belief. But this positive belief must be conviction of the truth of the great New Testament Christian realities, not conviction that the current theological explanation of them is right. Thus a man's theology may be "in quarantine," and ought to be when it is sick, while at the same time he can keep on preaching Christianity with unshaken confidence, and perhaps with even increased effectiveness.

Life is not begotten by theory, but by life.

The gospel is to extend its sway by embodying itself in forms of life, and so bringing its power to bear upon the lives of men. It was thus that Jesus preached it, and every successful preacher must follow him in this. The gospel must take possession of the preacher himself, of all Christians, indeed, set them on fire with the divine Spirit, and so put them into living touch with men. "Ye are my epistles, known and read of all men." The world will never be saved by theology, but only by the Christ-life reincarnated in loyal disciples, who live out the Master's principles of unselfish love.

Here is brought to light one great weakness of Protestantism: it puts undue emphasis upon theology. The public services of the church are of such a nature that, unless constant and intelligent care is exercised, the religious proclamation of the gospel degenerates into the intellectual presentation of Christian thought. The tendency for both preacher and listener is to be satisfied when the thought is pleasingly set forth and clearly understood. Even if Protestantism had a doctrinal system that did any kind of justice to the gospel, still this fundamental difficulty would remain. The question is not wholly one of a true or a false theology, but the more fundamental question of trying to save the world by theology at all, by that which in

its very nature appeals to only one part of man, and that the part least characteristically belonging to his religious life. Too often the Protestant rule has been a maximum of theology and a minimum of sympathy. What is needed for the conversion of the world is a maximum of sympathy with just enough theology to direct it intelligently. There is room for doubt whether the theological salvation of Protestantism is much better than the churchly salvation of Catholicism. A man can have an orthodox creed and remain unchristian, as truly as he can belong to the Roman Catholic church and still be un-Christlike.

There are signs of a better condition of things in the Protestant world. A clearer conception of the true nature of the gospel is making itself felt in less theological and more evangelical preaching. Moreover, Christianity is in much more vital touch with the world's life than it was fifty years ago. Protestantism is beginning to realize that the separation of church and state ought not to mean the divorce of religion and civic affairs; that Christianity must embody itself in the individual, social, and institutional life of an age, if it is to exercise its greatest influence. The early removal of the gospel from the realm of life to that of thought is the chief reason for the slow progress that the kingdom of God has made in

the world. It was due to this transformation that when Catholicism finally succeeded in conquering the secular world it was not the gospel of Jesus, but something else, that had triumphed. The Catholic idea that Christianity ought to dominate the organic life of society is right. The trouble with Catholicism has been its adulterated gospel and worldly method. It remains for Protestantism to carry out the idea by incorporating the gospel of Jesus into the institutional life of the world, according to the method inherent in the gospel itself. It is in these ways, rather than by means of theology, that the kingdom of God is to be advanced.

2. Nevertheless, the theological statement of the gospel is of great importance.

It is necessary, in the first place, in order that Christianity may express itself fully to thought. Christianity is a historical religion; "we have not followed cunningly devised fables." It had its beginnings at a definite time and place, and has entered into history and helped to direct its course. It has thus become a part of the world's thought and life. Moreover, Christianity deals with questions that touch the widest reaches of thought of which the human mind is capable. It is not merely a sentiment, nor a way of living, but a kind of thinking as well. And while to overemphasize and misplace this intellectual ele-

ment by identifying Christian thought with a given philosophical system, and requiring the universal acceptance of this, leads to disastrous consequences, yet, on the other hand, to underestimate this thought-element is to make of Christianity a chaotic mass of sentimentality, unrelated to objective reality and historical conditions, and to place it at the mercy of subjective and individual caprice. This is equally disastrous. The thing required is to deal with this truth in a way that shall do justice to the thought of Jesus, and not attempt to subject it to metaphysical and scholastic processes. Christian thought cannot be ignored, but must be expressed clearly and faithfully, if the gospel is to make itself fully known.

Theological statement is necessary, further, in order that Christianity may secure the complete allegiance of a man. Man is a thinking being. Intelligence is a constituent element in his nature. He must think. The more of a man he is, the more will he think. As soon as anything touches his life there is an instinctive effort of the rational faculty to bring it into adjustment with the existing store of knowledge. To the extent that this cannot be done successfully the new element remains unknown, and fails to influence the life. No one thoroughly accepts what he does not understand.

Much more is it true that a man cannot believe

what is contrary to his reason. When someone declares, for instance, that he believes a thing because it is in the Bible, whether it contradicts his reason or not, he has already accepted the Bible in its entirety because it seemed reasonable to him so to do; and it would do greater violence to his reason to change his previously established view of the Bible than to believe an isolated fact that might seem unreasonable. He still decides according to his reason. For every man the rational faculty is the final judge of the credibility of that which comes to him with claims of being the truth.

But the intellect is not only a constituent element in human nature, it is also regulative of activity and character. The estimate that a person puts upon a thing in his thinking largely determines what he will do with it. Feeling depends upon perception, and activity of the will depends upon both. A man cannot be expected, therefore, to leap in the dark. The more important the issue at stake, the greater the desire and the obligation to understand its bearings before taking action.

For these reasons, if Christianity is to acquire full dominion over a man, it must gain the allegiance of his rational faculty. If he is to be a strong Christian, he must be an intelligent one. Permanent dualism between the religious nature

and the rational nature either is impossible or is maintained at enormous cost. Sooner or later the man's thinking, be it little or much, must come into harmony with the gospel that has touched his conscience and will, or else these will follow his thinking away from Christianity. Christianity, therefore, does not exclude thought, but welcomes it; insisting only that it remain loyal to Jesus Christ in substance, spirit, and proportion.

To reach this rational nature and convince it the gospel must be expressed in terms of thought. Herein lies the necessity of theology. It is the business of this science, as we have already seen, to present the gospel in the various aspects in which it touches intelligence. It is the mediator between the gospel and current culture. Theology, therefore, has as its task the apprehension and systematization of Christian truth, together with the exposition of its relations to thought and to history. Its sole purpose in doing this is to gain the allegiance of the mind to Christianity; and therefore it must work, on the one hand, with direct reference to the thinking of the age that it wishes to influence, and, on the other, with strict fidelity to Christian truth.

Because of the regulative character of intelligence, it is this faculty that determines also

what comes within its own sphere and what lies outside of it. By means of the intellect a man decides that he is not all intellect, and that the purely intellectual is not the most valuable part of him. By philosophizing he decides not to be merely a philosopher. So also in religion, it is by theologizing that a man decides that theology is not the most important thing in Christianity, and that he will be something more than a theologian. Hence a part of the theological task is the recognition of its own proper value and limitations.

Theological statement is necessary, in the third place, for the intelligent guidance of the church as a whole. What has just been said of the individual is true also of the church. If it is to hold its faith strongly and permanently, that faith must approve itself to the common reason of Christendom; the church must understand its faith as well as feel it. It must know how to separate truth from error. It must be able to "try the spirits whether they be of God;" only remembering to try them according to Christ's standards, instead of by metaphysical dogmas of its own choosing. Furthermore, the practical activities of the church need to be directed intelligently, and to be kept true to the Christian ideals. If church doing outruns church thinking, it leads to disaster for both: the activity breaks connec-

tion with its sources, and runs dry in secularism ; the theology is deprived of its practical outlet, and becomes stagnant.

The church can win glorious missionary conquests, carry everything before it in great popular revivals, turn things upside down with its practical philanthropies and reforms, and yet all of this be only a temporary raid into the enemy's territory. In order to make permanent occupation of what it carries by assault it must conquer the world's intelligence and make Christian its thinking. Herein is one cause of the wonderful success of primitive Christianity. It translated itself into the thought of those early centuries and overcame it. And in all of the succeeding disciplinary period of the Teutonic peoples the thinking of the church played an important part. Without doubt this intellectual conquest and dominion was accomplished at great cost to the spiritual element in Christianity, by restricting the scope of its operation; but the evil was due to a mistaken conception of the nature of theology, not to theological statement as such, within the limits of its proper sphere. In spite of the danger of overemphasizing theology, it still remains true that the religion which is finally to bring the world under its sway must be a religion that commends itself convincingly to the world's intelligence.

III. THE RIGHT OF THEOLOGICAL RESTATEMENT.

The right of theological restatement is as clear and valid as the original right of statement, for it is exactly the same in kind. The only reason why it is questioned is the identification of the old statements with the gospel itself, and the mistaken notion that these are a part of New Testament Christianity. History makes it plain that when these formulations of doctrine were in process of making they were open questions, and that controversy raged fiercely about them, so great were the differences of opinion. But after they were once adopted by the church, and men's minds had become accustomed to them, and the passing centuries had made them a part of venerable antiquity, they became closed questions, and began to seem as sacred and binding as the gospel itself; men forgot how they had come into existence. When, later, the exigencies of the situation forced it to read these systems back into the Bible, Protestantism ceased to distinguish between them and New Testament Christianity. Thus, for Catholic and Protestant alike, the one on the ground of church authority, the other on that of supposed biblical sanction, the accepted statements of theology came to be regarded as an essential part of Christianity. For this reason, when the old statements are called in question, many people think that the gospel itself is being

attacked and the hope of salvation undermined; and so they strenuously contend for the old *creed* with all the religious fervor that only the defense of the old *faith* can legitimately call forth.

It is time that this fiction was given up. The known facts abundantly disprove it, and it stands in the way of the progress of Christianity. "Biblical theology" is a misnomor. There is no theology, properly so called, in the Bible. There is abundance of theological material, and great wealth of doctrine, in the New Testament sense of that term. The Bible is the source of all Christian theology. But theology is a science. It is a systematization of religious truth, and a philosophy offered in explanation of it. This science is not found in the Scriptures. The teachings of Jesus do not appear in a systematic form, but in terms of life and social relations. It requires laborious research and reconstruction to formulate them into scientific statements. Neither do the apostles present the gospel in a theology, although doubtless they come nearer to it than Jesus does, and that is why theology took its point of departure from them rather than from Christ. But still, even with them, while the theological material is more accessible, there is no systematic arrangement, nor attempt at true philosophical explanation. They wrote for specific practical purposes, and always massed their

teachings so as to bear upon the end in view. They were scientific neither in purpose nor in method. Paul may have had a theological system, but, if so, he did not incorporate it into the New Testament; and it is with great difficulty that we are able to reconstruct his system, even tentatively. It is full of gaps and of things taken for granted. Paul was not primarily a theologian, but a vigorous thinker and great religious reformer. The New Testament is a book of religious truth, not of theological science; and is content to state this truth in its practical aspects, upon the sole authority of Jesus Christ, and not because its philosophical foundations have been worked out and approved.

One searches the Scriptures in vain for such church dogmas as those of the Trinity, the person of Christ, and the atonement. This statement does not question the truth of a single declaration of the Bible on these great subjects, nor deny in the least their importance, nor pronounce judgment upon the dogmas as later formulated. It merely brings to a focus what has been said. The creeds that have passed current in the church for centuries were made without exception in post-biblical times. They have absolutely no divine sanction, except for the Catholic, who believes that the church continued New Testament inspiration and authority. It is entirely

legitimate for a Protestant to call them in question, recognizing meanwhile their former providential mission, without reflecting in the least upon his soundness in the faith. What man has made man has a right to criticise and change.

The right to restate theology, therefore, rests upon the same basis, and is as incontestable, as the right of original statement. In both cases it derives its justification, not from Bible sanction, but from the nature and value of theology itself. Theology first arose in response to the inborn impulse of the human mind *to know* and to arrange its knowledge in systematic form. Its continuation is due to the same impulse. It accomplished its purpose in the early centuries by assuming a certain form. If in another age it can fulfil its end better by adopting a new expression, it has as good a right to do so.

In this principle, involving the interrelations of the gospel, theology, and culture, is discovered a further vindication of the right of theological restatement.

The gospel itself is permanent, at least so far as we can now see. As long as the present moral world-order exists, the gospel of Jesus is better adapted to save it from sin and satisfy its deepest needs than any other means conceivable. With all of our short comings in its application, it has achieved far greater success than any other

agency of reform; and this is unquestionably due to its own intrinsic worth and its remarkable adaptation to the conditions of life. The gospel, moreover, was complete and final as embodied in the person, work, and teachings of Jesus. All that remained to be done was the work of application. No essential thing was lacking, to be supplied by later additions; nothing was out of proportion, to be corrected by a new distribution of emphasis. Then, as now, and forever, as long as God and holiness, human nature and human need, remain unchanged, the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.[1]

This permanent character of the gospel, however, does not pertain to theology. Theology has the definite aim of stating religion in terms of thought. It mediates between the gospel and culture. Its very object, therefore, requires it to enter into contemporary ways of thinking, and adopt as its means of expression the scientific and philosophical concepts, terminology, and dialectics of the age which it addresses. These inevitably react upon it. The meaning that they have previously acquired colors the truth they are now used to express. Thus in the nature of

[1] This final character of the gospel of Jesus is here assumed; no proof is attempted. For vindication of the assumption, see Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi.

the case there cannot be an independent dogmatic statement of Christianity. Theology is always a combination of Bible-teaching with the philosophical thought of the day in which it is formulated.

But this philosophy changes, and the culture represented by it passes away. The knowledge of one generation is only preparatory to that of the next. Thought is never final and perfect. Not that it is all false, but partial, incomplete, transitory. Each age sees through a glass darkly: the world awaits the clearer vision. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; for we know in part."

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they.
> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster."

The transitory character of culture, therefore, makes theology transitory also. The better the theology is adapted to fulfil its mission to a given age, the more fully will it be saturated with contemporary ways of thinking. When in the course of the world's progress this culture becomes obsolete, the theology of that age becomes

obsolete with it. This theology may have been formulated in the supposition that it was the only possible statement of Christianity, and so was the absolute truth of God. But the fuller knowlege of the new generation reveals the imperfections of the very systems of thought that have made its own glory possible. Truth abides forever; our apprehension of truth changes with the progress of thought: the gospel of Jesus is final and permanent; our statement of this gospel should keep pace with the growing culture. Inasmuch as it is the sole business of theology to mediate between the gospel and thought, when the old statements cease to do this there exists the unquestionable right of restatement to meet the requirements of the new conditions. Theology should neither be bound by the past nor seek to bind the future, but should demand a free and independent expression of the gospel in the present.

IV. THE NEED OF THEOLOGICAL RESTATEMENT AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Not only is it true that Christianity has a right to restatement, but it is further true that such restatement is absolutely obligatory whenever changed conditions have made the old statements obsolete. Such a time has come. If Christianity is to get the hold upon our

age that it ought, its theology must be restated.

1. Owing to the existence of a new civilization, the theological statements of the past are either meaningless or unsatisfactory to an increasing number of people, in that they are expressed in terms of an obsolete culture. This point was discussed so fully in connection with the modern religious movement for the recovery of the gospel (chap. iii) that it does not need to be considered at any length here. The state of things there described as the result of that process is the condition that now exists. As the movement for the recovery of the gospel was due to the nature of the modern spirit, so the movement for the restatement of the gospel is necessitated by the new culture which that spirit has created. This culture has occasioned a divorce between the modern church and its ancient theology.

The recovered gospel has manifested itself with mighty power in these latter days, and still is doing so. But there are signs of a coming decline unless the thinking of the church is so revivified that it shall be able to overtake and assume the leadership of the modern religious activities that have outrun it and come first to Christ. The relative dearth in missionary zeal and offerings is not due to hard times, but, partly at least, to the more fundamental difficulty here

pointed out. The missionary movement was caused by a genuine gospel revival, resulting from the persistent influence of the open Bible. The first fervor has passed away, and the popular interest will diminish unless it is led on by the consecrated thinking of the church. The same is true also with reference to the popular revivals of the past century in Christian lands. The preaching has been on the basis of the old theology, which has often been made an important issue. Men have not been converted by means of the theology, however, but rather because of the gospel truth presented in addition to the theology, and because of the incitement of religious feeling and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The theology has not gotten hold of them, their thinking has not been convinced, and when the feeling has subsided they have often had no definite conceptions to fall back upon. Thus the very preaching that emphasizes theology has failed to reach the faculty to which theology must appeal. This is one secret of superficial revivals, and of the present falling off in the demand for professional evangelists. If lasting work is to be done, if the ignorant are to be instructed, the alienated reclaimed, the heathen conquests extended, the gospel must now express itself in a theology that is in touch with modern thought. Such a restatement is directly in sympathy with

evangelistic activity, and will give it guidance. Evangelical Christians are making a fatal mistake when they protest against it.

All of the reasons that made it necessary for the gospel to express itself in a certain form in the early centuries in order to meet the intellectual needs of that age make it equally imperative for it now to re-express itself in new terms, if it is to exercise the greatest possible influence on modern life. Only thus can the blessings of the gospel be preserved side by side with liberty of thinking and the progress of thought.

2. As a part of the foregoing, but deserving special mention because of its direct bearing upon theology, a second reason for the restatement of Christianity at the present time lies in the modern achievements in other departments of Christian thought. The scientific study of the New Testament and of church history has produced a large body of new knowledge, which is still increasing. This knowledge has been accumulated independently of systematic theology, and has quietly and unintentionally undermined it. Consequently there is today a gulf between the scientific knowledge of the church and its authorized theology. It is necessary to reckon with this new knowledge and determine its effect upon Christian thought. Enough returns are already in to make it certain that a theological

reconstruction will have to take place, and to render the beginnings of the task possible. The best assured results are fortunately those having to do most directly with the chief subject-matter of theology. The new Bible exegesis has recovered the gospel of Jesus; theology should now undertake the restatement of it. The new system of theology must not be made a closed circle, however; but a scientific method should be adopted here, also, which will leave room for the incorporation of future results from the biblical and historical sciences.

3. A third reason why the gospel should be restated is that many of the old statements fail to do justice to the essential truth of Christianity; they are more or less extraneous to the faith. Early Christian theology was the lineal successor of Greek philosophy; and instead of starting with the gospel and expressing only that, it attempted to harmonize the gospel, as a new divine philosophy, with the existing systems. The result was that much outside matter was interwoven into theology. Then, after this had become identified with Christianity, all succeeding dogmatics had to reckon with the whole combination. Subsequent theology thus came to have as part of its subject-matter a mass of material that is not intrinsically a part of the Christian faith. A new statement of Christianity

is necessary which shall take the gospel message itself for its theme, and consider nothing else, or more, than this, with its necessary presuppositions and conclusions.

4. Somewhat akin to these others, still another reason for the restatement of Christianity is the need of a Protestant theology. Protestantism today has no theological system of its own. It started out with Roman Catholic dogmatics, and for three hundred and fifty years has been trying to modify this to suit its needs. The result has been a failure. This theology is contrary to the fundamental principle of Protestantism, inasmuch as it depends upon the church-development theory for its validity. It cannot be divorced from the Roman ecclesiastical system, whose inseparable and congenial companion it has been from the beginning. The whole Catholic system is organic; but Protestant modifications of it are fragmentary, without coherence or consistency. The Protestant theologians cut down the organic Catholic tree, sawed it up into timber, and built a mechanical theological house of it; and alas! the house has fallen upon our heads.

This lack of a characteristic theology accounts, at least in part (the other part being the undue emphasis put upon theology), for a Protestantism split up into sects. There is no organic framework to hold it together. It is futile to

talk of a reunion on the basis of Catholic theology, even though that be confined to the great historic creeds. If Protestantism is ever to be united, it must be upon the basis of its own fundamental principle. This principle is the primary New Testament truth that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ and by that alone; or, in another form, that Christianity is a life of faith in Christ, as set forth in the New Testament. Now, upon this Protestant foundation has been superimposed the Roman Catholic body of doctrine. Protestantism is thus made to rest upon two incongruous principles, and is divided against itself.

What is needed is a distinctive Protestant theology. The practical and ecclesiastical Reformation of the sixteenth century, which went back to the New Testament in matters of church reform and religious life, must be completed by a Protestant theological Reformation which shall not be afraid to cut beneath the whole Roman Catholic dogmatic development, go back to the New Testament for the subject-matter of Christian thought also, and give to Protestantism, in systematic form, an adequate and organic expression of its own fundamental idea. As this idea is that of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, Protestant theology will occupy itself with the explication of the Christian faith, as dis-

cussed under the preceding heading. Such a theology would have a determining influence in uniting Protestantism in its conflict with sin and with an antagonistic Catholicism.

This theological restatement, necessary as it is, is likely to occasion a great deal of discomfort to the men who undertake it. In the other departments of Christian knowledge the work can be done quietly, and its bearings not be clearly seen. But the theological task involves a conscious and deliberate break with the traditional theology of the church. It is not always recognized that the theologian is simply bringing to light the necessary implications of the results reached in other departments; he is regarded as the original disturber of the peace of the church, and is decried as an arch-heretic, while the real offenders go free. If we do not want a new theology we must stop the new Bible knowledge, we must overthrow the new scientific method, we must discountenance modern culture and civilization, we must roll the world backward toward that ancient past in which the old theology was formed. That is the only civilization to which it will ever be satisfactory.

In spite of the inherent difficulties of the task, however, in spite of misunderstanding or even abuse and persecution, the imperative duty of the

theologian today is to give to the church a theology which shall, on the one hand, do justice to the gospel itself, as rediscovered in the scientific study of the Christian sources, and thus furnish an adequate systematic expression for the fundamental principle of Protestantism; and which shall, on the other hand, so take account of modern culture as to express this permanent gospel in forms of thought and speech which, instead of being repulsive and ineffective, shall appeal to the modern world with the greatest possible force.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOSPEL RESTATED: A SUGGESTED THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM.

It is not so necessary to restate the gospel as it is to free it from the incumbrance of the old statements. These have often misrepresented and obscured it, and diminished its effectiveness in the modern world. When this evil is removed, and the gospel is allowed to stand forth as Jesus himself preached it, it will appeal powerfully to our age, even without any restatement. This is because of the gospel's universal application to common human needs and the universality of the form in which Jesus presented it. His teaching is animated by the spirit of intense reality, and is expressed in the language of life. These are two things especially characteristic of our own times. As we have seen, the desire for reality is the modern passion, reality in religion no less than in other things. In our age also life is at a premium. Everything is judged by its practicability for increasing the measure and richness of life. From the biologist's solitary study of its origin and forms, to the greatest invention applying the new scientific

discovery to the world of affairs, Life everywhere is king. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." And so Christ's gospel, charged with reality, and expressed in his own terms of life, is particularly adapted to present conditions.

Still, however, there is room for theological statement, since the gospel as preached by Jesus and the apostles did not have a systematic form. Our age, so scientific in its instincts, needs a scientific statement of this gospel of divine life and its implications. Inasmuch as Jesus' own forms of expression are so congenial to our times, and the sole business of theology is to mediate between the gospel and the thinking of an age, it is probable that no better terminology is now available than that which he employed. In this theology should consider itself most fortunate, for its task is thereby greatly simplified. By means of this terminology the gospel now needs to be stated in a scientific system of formal thought.

The following pages constitute an attempt to do this, in such a way as to meet the requirements of the discussion hitherto. It must be borne in mind that what is here given is only a most meager outline, by way of suggestion, and that it should be judged accordingly.

I. THE GOVERNING POSITION OF JESUS CHRIST IN THEOLOGY.

1. Theology must be loyal to the thought of Jesus. Christianity is not some vague and indefinite thing feeling around in the dark among the world's philosophies and hopes for its message. It has its message in Christ. Our business, therefore, is to find out what his thought is — his thought about God, the world, and man; about sin and salvation from sin; about how we are to live in our social relations; about everything that pertains to human interests. When found, this thought is to furnish the ruling conceptions for theology, is to be adopted by Christians as their guide, and, in all legitimate ways, is to be pressed by them upon others. We need to ascertain this teaching of Christ in its content, its emphasis or proportion, and in what we may call its coloring; and then preserve these in our own theological system.

This central and dominating position of Christ is the most important thing to be considered here — more important than a complete understanding of his person; for we can be loyal to him and to his thought whether we can determine his place in the world with entire satisfaction or not.

2. As a corollary to the ruling position of

Jesus in theology, the question arises: How are we to know him and what he taught? This involves one of the most important Christian presuppositions: the place of the Bible in Christianity.

The Bible is not the foundation of Christianity. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," says the apostle. The Bible does not come first, and then Jesus, because the Bible tells of him. Jesus comes first, he is the reality, he actually entered into history and wrought out redemption in the midst of humanity; the Bible is the record and the interpretation of this Jesus and his work of redemption. The salvation of mankind is accomplished outside of any book, among the living forces of history. It is a fact, whether recorded in a book or not. The Bible grows out of this historical redemption; it is the result of it, not the cause. This is a distinction of great importance, if we would preserve for Christianity its vital character and give to the Bible its proper place.

The Old Testament is the record of God's preparatory work, in the life of the Hebrew people, for the establishment of Christianity in the world. God separated this people, and entered into its historical life through prophet, priest, law, and national institution. He re-

vealed himself in the historical life itself. The Old Testament is the record of that life, and at the same time is also a part of it, because produced by it. Because of its intimate connection with the preparatory stages of Christianity, it will always have a special value. Because of the revelation which God therein makes of himself, his purposes for men, and the principles according to which he governs and judges nations, it will remain a great storehouse of divine wisdom. But the Old Testament is not distinctively the Christian book. Its chief significance lies in the influence that it exerted in making Jesus of Nazareth possible and fitting the world for his reception. He himself then became the foundation of Christianity, and thenceforth the relation of the Old Testament to the religion which he founded became indirect.

Jesus lived and accomplished his mission of salvation in the midst of the world's life. The New Testament gospel narratives are the record of this. He set forth the principles according to which his new religion was founded, and gave commandments to his followers. The gospel narratives are also the record of these. They derive their importance from the fact that it was Jesus, the founder of Christianity, who lived and spoke what they record.

The new life brought to the world by Jesus organized itself into a church, under the immediate direction of those who had been most intimately associated with him, and therefore best understood his will; and who, because of their unique position, enjoyed in an extraordinary measure the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts records this, in part. These churches found themselves in special conditions of need and danger in the untried conflict with heathenism, as the gospel in institutional form first entered into the world's affairs. The apostles, knowing Christ's mind, and enjoying his Spirit, wrote epistles in which they adapted this gospel to these concrete conditions of thought and life in the churches. These various writings, thus called forth by the early historical life of Christianity in its creative period, were collected by the church in the second century, and have become the classical literature of Christianity.

The importance of this literature is not due to outside causes, however, but to its internal relationship to the historical Christ and the institutional establishment of Christianity. It is the literature of the Christian foundations. Its inspiration is the inspiration which entered into human life in Jesus Christ, and found expression in the Christian church organized under the direction of his apostles. The circumstances attending its ori-

gin can, in the nature of the case, never be reproduced, and hence the New Testament has a unique character and an imperishable validity. It is not, however, a Christian law book so much as the underlying constitution according to which all Christian legislation must be enacted.

This constitutional character of the New Testament determines the nature of our loyalty to it. The authoritative quality of Christ's teachings is sufficiently obvious, and does not need to be enlarged upon. The case is somewhat different with the other portions of the New Testament, notwithstanding the traditional custom of putting all parts of the book upon the same plane. The question has already been touched upon above in discussing the new exegesis (pp. 103–6) and the new attitude toward the New Testament literature (pp. 114–17). The difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of the apostles may be summed up in a single sentence: his was universal in both form and substance; theirs was universal in substance, but local in form. No better illustration can be found than Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, which is the adaptation of Jesus' teaching of the forgiveness of sins to an age steeped in legalism. The doctrine of forgiveness most effectively takes that form in opposition to a theory of salvation

by works. Jesus did not directly attempt to combat legalism, but Paul did, and this accounts for the form of his teaching. The underlying truth is the same in both cases, but Paul has localized it and intellectualized it for polemical purposes. Similar conditions reappeared in Luther's day, and that partly accounts for his adoption of Paul's terminology rather than that of Jesus. Again the authorized salvation had come to be a matter of works, and the conditions of Pharisaism were almost literally reproduced. Paul's juridical expression of the doctrine of forgiveness exactly fitted this condition of things, as it had that of his own day, and as it will that of all generations in which like conditions reappear. The doctrine of justification by faith is true always, and influences some men in every age; but it is a particular expression of the more fundamental and universal truth of the forgiveness of sins Such an age as our own, certainly in no danger of overemphasized legalism, will be more quickly and deeply reached by the original doctrine of forgiveness.

The apostles were thus the first theologians of the church: the first to mediate the gospel of Jesus to local conditions of culture, although it is true that even they did not do this in systematic form. This conception does not militate in the least against the idea of their divine inspiration,

but rather strengthens it. They were God-appointed and God-inspired men for the great task of giving Christianity its first organized application to the world's life. Their inspiration did for them two things. In the first place, it led them to understand Christ's gospel. "The Holy Spirit," said Jesus, "shall testify of me; he shall take the things of mine, and shall show them unto you; he shall bring to your remembrance all things which I have spoken unto you." The promise was kept. It was not a different gospel that they preached, as uninspired theologians have so often done, but the gospel of Jesus, apprehended by spiritual inspiration. In the second place, their inspiration helped them to present the gospel in forms that were effectual in saving the men whom they addressed. "The Holy Spirit shall give you utterance," Christ had promised. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses." These promises also were fulfilled: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak . . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance." "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness," and with success, it may now truthfully be added. Thus, with the apostles, theology was practical in its aim and method; they were first of all preachers—and theologians

only because the gospel required local adaptations for successful preaching. The understanding of the gospel of Jesus, and power to present that gospel convincingly to their generation—that was apostolic inspiration, and indicates the divine mission and method of theology. Would that later theologians had always followed the inspired precedent!

We see herein what loyalty to the New Testament involves. It does not consist in taking the apostles' terminology, formed to meet concrete historical conditions, and binding this upon all ages; but in following their method, and so doing for our age what they did for theirs: finding the thought of Jesus, and adapting it to existing needs. In what respect, then, do the New Testament epistles have special value? Because of the unique position of the New Testament writers. Their inspiration differs from all later inspiration in historical connections. They were either immediately acquainted with Jesus, or with the men who knew him well. They had peculiar and untransferable opportunities for understanding his gospel in its substance and spirit. Thus the New Testament applications of the gospel constitute, so to speak, a book of religious decisions, of incalculable precedential value. The apostolic writings, therefore, while being in the form of special messages to definite churches and individuals, are of the

nature of a constitution for later generations, somewhat as the judicial decisions of English courts constitute a large part of the English constitution. By means of these first inspired concrete apostolic decisions, we are able to understand, as would be possible in no other way, the nature of the gospel which they received from Jesus. All new legislation for the needs of succeeding ages must be in harmony with this underlying New Testament teaching. The New Testament is therefore the inspired and permanent constitution of Christianity, existing partly in universal form, as given by Jesus, and partly in particular inspired precedential decisions and applications, as handed down by the apostles.

The New Testament literature is subject to the usual canons of historical and literary criticism. But, like other literature, it also is to be judged according to the purpose and spirit of its writers. That is, it is to be judged as religious literature, not as theological or scientific writing, in the modern sense. As such, its truths must be spiritually discerned, in order to be appreciated. A scientific exegesis of the Bible cannot be made without the reverent religious study demanded by the nature of the writings. Only a Christian can be a scientific Bible critic. The New Testament is likewise to have equal rights of credence with other literary and historical

writings, and not to be discounted because of its peculiar subject-matter.

So criticised and judged by fair tests, in the New Testament the life of Jesus stands out clearly in its main historical outlines, as do also his teachings in their fundamental principles. This is sufficient. The salvation of the world rests upon him. If we are reasonably certain of him, Christianity as a world-religion is secure.[1] It is well for us to look at the subject in its large outlines, at times, and realize that Christianity does not depend upon proving that no errors exist in the Bible, or even in the New Testament, but that it depends solely upon Jesus Christ; of whom the New Testament is a reasonably authentic presentation, both as regards his life and his teachings. This Scriptural and common-sense view of the New Testament will save the church from two dangerous extremes. On the one hand, realizing that the Bible is not the foundation of Christianity, the church will lose all fear of historical and literary criticism of the Scriptures, and will have no need to put a premium upon uncritical faith. Changes of view, or discovery of discrepancies, will not vitally affect faith; while a proof-text Christianity is always in mortal terror. The New Testament in its main contents is well established,

[1] See again Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi.

and makes Jesus known clearly enough so that we can rest our faith upon him. The historical and ever-living Christ thus becomes the basis of a perennial Christianity. On the other hand, realizing the unique and regulative character of the New Testament literature, the church will not attempt to depart from its historical foundations, but will come back again and again to the New Testament as the standard by which to test its life in every age.

3. The requirements of Christ's thought, as recorded in the New Testament, are met by the following definition of the gospel, which constitutes the subject-matter of theology: *The gospel is the glad news of salvation from sin and its consequences; this salvation consisting in eternal life, mediated from God to men by Jesus Christ, and expressing its social relations in a kingdom of God.*

II. JESUS CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Inasmuch as it is through Jesus of Nazareth that we know the nature and conditions of salvation, receive the Christian conception of God and the world, and enter into communion with the Father, it is most fitting that theology should begin with the consideration of him and his work.

The mission of Jesus.—The mission of Jesus was to bring men into the blessings of eternal

life, by bringing eternal life into them. In this he acted in complete sympathy with the Father's desires and purposes. By entering fully into the life of humanity, he knew its griefs and bore them; by suffering with men, he made known the Father's divine love and compassion; by renouncing sin in himself, and denouncing it in others, he brought to light its inner nature, and God's eternal antagonism to it. Jesus forced upon men a new conception and conviction of sin, and made them hate wickedness; he gave them a new vision of God, and made them love him; he set in operation new motives, and gave men power to actualize their new ideals. These things that he did in his life he did in a profounder way by his death, in which he endured the last measure of vicarious suffering, sealed with his blood the truths that he had taught, and made atonement for mankind.

Thus the life of Jesus, culminating in his sacrificial death, made manifest in eternal antithesis the incarnate essence both of love and of sin. As a judgment of sin, the atonement is a demonstration of the justice of God; although Jesus himself never so speaks of it, and the expression is used only once in the New Testament. The later theological dogma of the death of Jesus as an appeasing of the wrath of God, and consequent satisfaction of his justice by commercial equiva-

lent, is absolutely foreign to Christ's thought. There can be little doubt that a certain school of theology has committed a double injustice: it has visited the punishment of the guilty upon the innocent, thus doing violence to morality; and it has first exacted payment for a debt, and then declared that God forgives it, thus doing violence to equity. As we turn from traditional theology to Christ, we find that what it calls the atonement, although not so designated by him, still is no myth. But here its real nature appears. Not only does the atonement meet the requirements of God's justice, but it is even more a manifestation of the divine love, suffering with and for sinners, in order that it may save them. This is the inner meaning of the death of Christ, and we shall not be true to his thought until we return to it. Love cannot save except by entering into the condition of the one to be saved, and vicariously bearing his sorrow and even his sin. The cross of Christ, while not divorced from considerations of justice, is yet pre-eminently the divine manifestation of this truth; rather, it is the incarnate doing of this divine thing, in order that the world may be made to feel God's heart so as to accept his help.

This great truth cannot be permitted to die along with untenable theories of the atonement which men may make and overthrow. Neither

should our acceptance of the fact be prejudiced by the unsatisfactoriness of the theory. The gospel stops with the *fact* of the atonement. Apart from theory, back of theory, is the divine fact that Jesus entered into the world as the representative of God, and by his life and by his death in our behalf brought God's salvation to men. The Bible always presents the subject, not for theoretical purposes, but with the practical aim of bringing men to God. Holding to these statements in the spirit in which they were given, a man is left free to combine them into such a speculative philosophical theory as to his mind most satisfactorily explains them, or to leave them unexplained by any theory, if he so choose. For a thousand years after the death of Jesus the church had no systematic doctrine of the atonement, the constructive theories beginning with Anselm. A thousand years hence the present theories will have developed into more adequate expression of the truth. All theories are fragmentary and partial. The moral theory, the governmental theory, the substitutionary theory, the vicarious theory — all of these contain truth, and some of them more than others; but the atonement itself is greater and richer and truer than any or all of them. We rest our hope upon the fact itself, not upon men's attempted explanation of it. Theories of the atonement are sure to

change with the growing thought of the race, and should do so; the fact of the atonement abides the same forever.

The person of Christ.—Probably the church has been justified in always placing the person of Christ before his work. Is he such a person as can accomplish the divine task he has undertaken? is a question of fundamental importance. The Christian conception of this person, however, should be determined for us, not by what men thought concerning the matter in the fourth century, but by what the New Testament says about him and by what we may justly infer from this.

What did Jesus teach about himself? Although he does not give the answer to this question in any dogmatic form, his own idea is nevertheless plain. He is the perfect Man, fully identified with humanity both in constitution and in life —tempted, suffering, sympathizing, serving, living the normal human life without sin. But he is uniquely related to God, so intimately and fully that he can say with truth, "I and my Father are one." He is the Christ, the authorized messenger of the Father, the revelation of his will. He is the mediator of salvation, the way to God and to life, the Savior of men. He was with the Father before the world existed, knows fully the Father's heart and shares his life. "My Father"

—how much this means to Jesus! It certainly involves an identity with God that is *sui generis*. He demands of all who would have life unfaltering loyalty to himself. He will be with them in spiritual presence and power after his resurrection and ascension. He will come, at last, in glory to judge the world.

The thought of the apostles concerning the person of Christ contains the same elements found in the teaching of Jesus: he is for them also the perfect man and the divine Lord. More emphasis is perhaps placed by them upon his divine attributes and dignity, but not to the exclusion of a real humanity. It is evident that aside from these two strong convictions, opinions concerning his person were still in a fluid and unformed state. They had not yet crystallized. The prologue of John's gospel, the second chapter of Philippians, and the epistle to the Hebrews look toward a more reasoned treatment of the person of Christ, but the religious interest even here completely dominates the speculative. The time of definitions had not come; it was rather a time of love and loyalty.

What are we therefore to think of Christ? Here arise the questions relating to christological presuppositions. These are not of such an exclusively metaphysical character as has generally been assumed in the past. Christ's significance

is chiefly of a religious nature. Religiously, he has the value of God; that is, the man who starts with him finds God. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. This is plain, both from Jesus' teaching and from human experience. But it is of importance to note that, when Jesus so speaks, he always speaks religiously, not metaphysically. Nothing can be more evident. This religious value can be accepted, and the resulting blessedness of communion with God enjoyed, even though the metaphysical relation should never be understood.

More than this, no metaphysical explanation at all is greatly to be preferred to one which stands in the way of the full influence of Christ's religious and ethical power. The early church attempted to express the truth about Christ in the Logos doctrine, and in the Chalcedonian dogma of the two natures in one person. For some this explanation is still satisfactory. Others may, perhaps, express it more satisfactorily for themselves in some other form, or may not succeed in finding any adequate explanation. If the old statement obscures for us the great truths that Jesus declared about himself, rather than explains and enforces them, it may legitimately be dismissed. We are not bound by the theological findings of the later church, but only by the gospel facts. All metaphysical statements

of Christ's nature are beyond the range of his own teaching, and hence are binding only upon those who make them, or find it helpful to accept them. At the present time satisfactory christological statements seem to be far in the future. It is probable that we shall not be able to formulate them until we know more about what man is. At least it is safe to say that in the coming statement psychology will have more influence, and metaphysics less.

Meanwhile Christ's perfect oneness with the Father and with man, in the sense in which he taught it, making it possible for him to be the full revelation of God's ethical nature, and the divine Savior of men, lies at the very basis of the Christian salvation and hope. As Paul puts it: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." The church cannot give up this plain gospel truth without losing its power and abandoning its mission. In a real sense Jesus Christ was the incarnation of God. He belongs to the inner circle of God's being and has expressed this in a real human personality. This is the truth contended for in the old christological creeds, and is the priceless heritage bequeathed by them to us. When the new christological formulations are made they must not be permitted to rob us of it.

III. GOD THE AUTHOR AND SOURCE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

The Christian God is the heavenly Father revealed by Jesus Christ. Theology has too long occupied itself with a Greek philosophical deity and a Roman governor of the universe. It is time that now, at last, we let Christ interpret the God of Christianity. He is a personal, spiritual God, requiring a true and spiritual worship. He is a righteous God, who so loves the world that he has done, and is doing, all that he can to redeem it from sin, not hesitating to give his only begotten Son to make known his forgotten love, and to show his holy nature that cannot tolerate sin. He is watching for the return of his prodigal sons with all of a Father's anxious solicitude, and goes to meet them on the way. If Jesus did not teach the universal fatherhood of God directly, he certainly taught a universal love and care which are paternal in kind.

Yet with those who repent of their sin and turn to him through Christ, God comes into special relations as Father, because they acknowledge their sonship. Only for the loving and dutiful son can a father accomplish his heart's desires. God gives these penitent sinners power, or authority, to become his sons in a special sense. They come into new relations of endearment to him. He who watches over the growing lilies

and the homeless birds cares so minutely for his own children that the very hairs of their heads are numbered. Those who trust him come into vital union with him, and so receive eternal life, and can never perish. He is Sovereign of the universe and of the kingdom of God, but his sovereignty is exercised according to eternal principles of righteousness and love which pertain to his essential nature. If he is absolute Sovereign, he is not therefore arbitrary Sovereign: his rule is still absolutely merciful and righteous.

This holy God is spiritual in his activity. The Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is God dwelling in his church, in individual Christians, and, to a less extent, in the world at large: guiding and comforting and inspiring those who receive and yield to him; moving to repentance those who are living in sin.

Concerning God, also, there are doubtless theological presuppositions of great importance. While, if we are to be true to Christ's thought, the ethical and religious nature of God will be given precedence over his metaphysical attributes, yet God's metaphysical being and his relation to the creation and continuance of the universe must also be considered. At this point theology comes into intimate touch with, and dependence upon, the philosophical systems of the day, where the problem is being scientifically and progressively

worked out. Probably the chief task of theology in this connection is not so much the establishment of any one philosophy as it is the criticism of all systems, and the rejection of those that are not able to express the distinctive Christian truths of God's personality and free providential activity. Within these limits the widest latitude may be given. So far as Christianity is concerned, it can tolerate any philosophical system that is congenial with its religious ideas. The absolute philosophy has not been reached, and never will be. Christianity may well use existing systems so far as they will help it to gain a stronger hold on the world's thought, but should not ally itself too closely with any one of them.

IV. MAN THE RECIPIENT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

God's provision of eternal life is made for the human race, and for individual members of this race. Theology, therefore, must consider the nature, capabilities, and life of man.

The origin and nature of man. — Here we have to do more with anthropological presuppositions than with direct Christian teaching.

1. Christ has nothing to say about the historical origin of man, and therefore Christianity is committed to no special theory concerning the matter, not even the Old Testament theory, except in its religious aspects, at most. The

Jewish theological implications are not a component part of Christianity. The question of the origin of man is not of vital interest or importance. In the place which it has given to the subject, theology has marked one of its departures from its proper task. If the matter had been of special significance, Jesus would not have passed it over without comment. With his deep insight and his practical mission, he took the world as he found it, and man as an already existing being. Man is here. How he came to be here is not of much account for religion. The important problem is: What is he going to do with himself now that he is here, and what is he going to make of himself for the future?

As Christianity is not committed to any one theory concerning the origin of humanity, neither is it concerning the much-discussed question of the origin of the individual soul. Whether the theory of pre-existence advocated by Origen be true; or that of creationism, which has found able advocates; or that of traducianism, as adopted by Augustine; or any other that may be advanced—the New Testament does not say. Christianity is not committed to any of them, and no theory is of fundamental importance. We may well await the further progress of knowledge for our philosophy regarding the question, or relegate it to the realm of life's insoluble mysteries.

2. It is different with reference to the nature of man. While the question of historical origin is not connected with salvation, the constitution or nature of man is necessarily and most intimately concerned with it. Here, therefore, Christianity is more explicit.

In the first place, humanity is an organism: the various members are vitally related. In Christ's doctrine of human brotherhood, in Paul's doctrine of the headship of Adam—all through the New Testament this idea is taken for granted. There is very little said about the exact nature of this relationship, but the practical fact remains, a fact everywhere apparent in life, and receiving special emphasis in our own times, that the human race is organically united. No man liveth unto himself. The sins of a father are visited upon his children. Heredity and environment are index fingers pointing forever to the organic nature of humanity.

In the second place, man is created in the image of God. Not merely he was, but he is now so created; every man is. This is the religious truth expressed in the Bible account of creation. The point at issue is not so much the historical origin as the permanent constitution of man. Humanity is godlike in nature. Sin did not change this, and cannot. The proof is that after many ages God entered into this same

humanity in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The incarnation is an abiding demonstration of the fundamental godlikeness of human nature. Sin has distorted and dimmed this divine element in man, but not eliminated it. His very rational being is bound up with it. The yearnings and aspirations of the human heart are the stirrings of the divinity within us. The theological doctrine of total depravity is found neither in Scripture nor in human nature. It is this remnant of divinity in men that makes them redeemable. It is this to which God calls, and which answers to his long-forgotten voice. It is this which gave to Jesus his unfaltering faith in human nature and his hope for the most abandoned sinner.

Yet, in spite of his divine constitution, man is a sinner, both by voluntary act and by nature. Jesus' whole attitude toward men is governed by his perception of the ruin wrought by sin. He does not say much about man's lost condition, and he offers no theory explaining how it came to be, but he everywhere assumes it and acts with it in view. The apostles are equally emphatic, and even more explicit: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one." And because of the organic nature of humanity, involving vital relationship and hereditary bias, the predisposition

to sin is passed on from father to son. Men belong to a sinful race and inherit a nature prone to evil. There is, however, no teaching in Scripture that upon the basis of this sinful inheritance, and apart from voluntary wrong-doing, are guilt and condemnation pronounced upon a man.

These three truths—the organic character of humanity, man's fundamental godlikeness, and his sinful nature and deeds—are the important Scripture teachings about the nature of man. They may well receive consideration at the hands of those who are trying to understand man by scientific study. But anthropology and psychology, in the proper scientific sense of those terms, are not matters of divine revelation. The facts concerning human nature must be sought for as any other knowledge. Here, as in the philosophical idea of God, theology is dependent upon science—in this case upon psychology—for its material; and part of its task is to preserve these three great truths, and reject any psychology that is hostile to them, rather than to identify itself absolutely with any current theory.

The origin and nature of sin.—As with the historical origin of the human race, so also concerning the origin of sin, Christ has nothing to say, and Christianity is bound to no theory.

Again Jesus adopts a practical attitude, and takes the position that when a man is in danger the problem is not how he got into it, but how to get him out.

But it is relevant and necessary to ask what the character of the difficulty is. This must be known in order to suit the help to the emergency. So, while theology has no need to say anything whatever about the origin of sin, it does need to consider carefully the nature of sin. There is often confusion of thought on this point. It is sometimes said that it is necessary to know how man got into sin in order to save him from it. As a matter of fact, it is not the origin, but the nature, of his lost condition that needs to be understood. Men are here, actual sinners in a world of sin. What is sin? This was the question that Jesus asked and answered; and this is the question, therefore, with which theology is concerned.

The Old Testament idea of sin is that of disobedience to law; Jesus' idea is that it is lovelessness, or selfishness. Supreme love to God is man's highest privilege and duty. Nothing else than this will satisfy God, or realize man's true being and destiny. The greatest sin is the breaking of this greatest commandment. Sin is therefore not so much in acting as in failure to act; not so much in doing concrete wrongs as in fail-

ure to do the great right. The second requirement, like unto the first, is that men should love each other as they love themselves. The second great sin, also, is therefore a not doing—failure to love. The nature of sin is the same in both cases: it is lovelessness. It is a matter of the disposition or character. All particular sins are the result of this underlying sin. On the other hand, love to God and man fulfils the whole law: concrete acts of right are the result of this fundamental right. This was the new and unique element in Jesus' teaching concerning sin and righteousness. He reduced them both to their lowest terms and brought out their elementary principles.

V. THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Such being the nature of man and the nature of sin, Jesus set about saving him from sin. The essence of this salvation is eternal life. "I came," said Jesus, "that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life."

The nature of eternal life.—This life is of

the same kind as God's, it is spiritual, eternal, holy. It is therefore independent in nature — although, as we shall see, not in expression — of the world of sense about us. It lies back of the world, within it, and above it, giving to the world meaning and value. It has its own laws, in the keeping of which is the continuance of its blessings. Everlasting life is the gift of God, the gift of himself. It consists in the abiding communion with men that guarantees the continued bestowal of his Spirit and his power. Thus intimately united with him, it is eternal in its nature, as he is eternal. And as God is holy, and cannot have fellowship with sin, this life is a holy life; all who are to live in communion with God must take his attitude toward sin both in themselves and as it exists in the world. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Entrance into eternal life. — Eternal life is entered by spiritual birth. Christ's thought here is the same as that more fully elaborated by Paul. Man is born of the earth, and is carnal; to be carnally minded is death The man who is not in vital communion with God is dead, and does not know life. He must be born again, from above, of the Spirit. As man must be born once of human parents in order to enter into earthly life, so must he be born again, of the

Spirit, in order to enter into the eternal spiritual life.

This new birth is conditioned upon repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. As God is eternally opposed to sin, and eternal life is a life of holiness, sin must be left behind when one applies for entrance into life. Repentance is this very thing: it is a determined turning from sin to the full extent of one's power. It, however, does not give assurance of success, for it can supply no power to conquer sin. It is negative and preparatory. Actual deliverance from sin is assured only by faith, the positive complement of repentance. Because of the religious value of Christ, faith in him puts a man into touch with the spiritual forces of God, and so brings these forces to bear upon him in cleansing and saving power. That is why whosoever believes on the Son has eternal life; not merely as a future hope, but as a present reality. He has already come into touch with God, the source of life.

From this is evident Christ's conception of the nature of faith. Faith is not, and cannot be, a matter of assent to a set of propositions which are regarded as embodying the true philosophy. It is not so much an intellectual as a religious act. It presupposes intellectual conviction, doubtless, but adds to this the loyal and loving

trust of the heart. And not only is it religious in its nature, but in its object also, being directed toward a person whom it has come to regard as the one who can save from sin. The confidence and trust in this person necessarily involve belief in what he says and the purpose to obey his commandments. Thus Christian faith is a sure confidence in Jesus as Savior; a humble, trustful reliance upon him and upon the God whom he reveals; together with a willing and teachable spirit which seeks to know the will of Jesus in order to obey it. A man having such a faith God can save and bring into eternal life; for he can teach him his will and communicate to him his power.

The spiritual birth, conditioned on man's part by repentance and faith, is accompanied on God's part by the forgiveness of sins. This is not merely the remission of the penalty of sin, nor a forensic declaration of justification, but a real forgiveness of sin itself and the reception of the sinner into fellowship with God. It is no commercial barter, but a free act of divine grace. The wanderer has returned, the sinner has repented and sought forgiveness, the new germ of life has been implanted assuring deadly antagonism to sin and certain victory over it. What more does God want? Nothing. He welcomes his repentant son with absolute forgiveness.

In spite of its tragic sadness, and our desire to escape the conclusion, it yet remains true, in the very nature of the case, that those who refuse to comply with these conditions continue in death. There is no life except upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. Jesus does not say that it is desirable that men should be born again, but, "Ye must be born again." Unless a man comes into living touch with God, he cannot see life, and the righteous indignation of God rests upon him. God does not condemn a man for being born with a sinful nature and into a sinful heritage. That is his misfortune, not his fault, and evokes in God only a sympathetic desire to deliver him. The basis of God's condemnation is man's continuance in his sinful estate when deliverance is offered him. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." If a man chooses to remain in darkness and death, he is himself responsible for the consequences. God sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. If it rejects him, it pronounces its own condemnation. Nothing else could by any possibility result.

Christ's thought concerning life and death is here manifest. Life is union with God; death is the absence of this life. Both are present realities rather than future possibilities, although

each has its future culmination. As long as a man is away from God he is dead. If he remains away forever, he forever remains in death, and the wrath of God abides upon him forever. If there is endless punishment, it is because of endless sin. As to whether a man will continue thus forever in sin the language of Scripture is thought by some not to be absolutely explicit, although to the plain reader it would seem to teach everlasting punishment. We know, moreover, that the conditions upon which eternal life may be had will not change, and that the tendency of character is to progressive fixedness. That in course of time it will become in a given man so fixed as to make repentance practically impossible is certainly the more probable conclusion.

The continuance of life.—Faith in Jesus is not merely the condition of entrance into eternal life; it is likewise the condition of continuance and growth. Sometimes faith is virtually limited to the beginning of the Christian life. Such a text as, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is taken as referring to one act, to be performed at a given time, and all is completed. There is willingness to trust Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but no real idea of trusting him for power to live by. This accounts for the large number of men and women

who have tried Christianity and made a failure of it. Having entered into life they attempted to go forward by themselves, and lost touch with the source of power. It is also the secret of the undeveloped Christian possibilities which everywhere are found. There is a false conception of faith. Faith is the teachable, humble, trusting spirit, the spirit turned Godward. It is the confident, courageous, hopeful, working spirit. It is not the highest thing in the Christian life, but is an indispensable condition of the highest and best. The continuance of life and its progressive develoment depend upon favorable environment as truly in the spiritual world as in the natural. God is the environment of spiritual growth. By faith we come into living contact with that environment. Not merely for spiritual birth is faith necessary, but "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith."

Another thing involved in faith is loyalty to Jesus Christ throughout the whole course of life. There is no true faith which does not include the spirit of obedience. Separate acts of obedience are the fruit of faith; but the will to obey is a part of faith itself. Here again we find a secret of the superficial and fruitless Christianity which is so prevalent. Another kind of faith than that of the New Testament has been in vogue—a faith which has not realized that to

be a Christian means honest, determined, permanent loyalty to Jesus as Lord of daily living as well as Savior from death. Salvation involves so complete a change that it is no less a thing than death to the old life of selfishness and resurrection to a new life in which Christ shall rule; a life in which every question is to be answered as Jesus would answer it, every thought tested by his thought, every act governed by his law of life. We are to live as he lived. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," said Jesus. "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." To take up our cross does not mean to do hard things; it means to do the one great thing—to crucify self. As Jesus did, so are we to do, be crucified, that we may follow him in self-sacrificing service. To be a Christian is to be Christ's man; nothing else, nothing less.

The continued life of faith, involving vital touch with God and loyal allegiance to Jesus, will be a sanctified life; that is, a life set apart for sacred purposes, and becoming progressively holy. This is the New Testament idea of sanctification. When a man becomes a Christian he becomes a partner with God for the accomplishment of God's holy aims. But the vessel so set apart must be cleansed. Christians ought to be progressively overcoming sin. Sin should

have less dominion today than yesterday, less tomorrow than today Do we not almost ignore God's promise not to permit us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but with every temptation to provide a way of escape? Have we not overlooked Jesus' injunction to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect? Have we not failed to lay to heart the truth declared by John that the man born of God cannot keep on sinning? The fact that the New Testament doctrine of sanctification has sometimes been misunderstood and brought into disrepute does not vitiate the truth of it, nor make less binding the obligation on the part of God's people to rise to a higher plane of living. As men live by faith they will receive both the motive and the power to conquer sin.

The result and reward of eternal life.— These are to be found, not outside, but within, in Christlike character. In earthly life the highest reward is more life, something that will make life richer and deeper. So it is with eternal life. All figures and illustrations used in the Bible bring out this truth. The reward of eternal life is more eternal life—an increased capacity and increased opportunities for life. "To him that hath shall be given," is the law of reward.

This reward is the legitimate and logical result of the Christian life. As living in the realm of

eternal life involves increasing holiness, so the final result is holiness. Or is there any final result? It is rather an endless process of growth and perfection. The new life itself is its own reward. The progressive character of the Christian prize does not, however, imply continued sin. Immaturity and imperfection are not sin. They become sinful only when the process of development is arrested. A condition which is sinless today becomes sinful tomorrow, because one ought to have outgrown it and has not. We have reason to hope that for the Christian the time will come when growth will progress without sin. This involves Christlike character, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, full of infinite possibilities and unspeakable delight.

VI. ETERNAL LIFE AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

So far we have been considering the essential nature of the Christian salvation. We have found that it consists in eternal life, mediated from God to men through Jesus Christ. We now come to another aspect of the matter. Eternal life does not remain an isolated phenomenon, affecting only God and individual men, but enters into social relations and organizes a new community, the kingdom of God. Sociology, therefore, at least in some of

its bearings, must be considered by Christian theology.

The organic nature of the kingdom of God.— The very idea of a kingdom involves life. In the kingdom of God the eternal life which we have been discussing is the life to be organized. This life is first; not first a kingdom, and then life put into it; but there is first spiritual life, which then brings its subjects into social relations, and so organizes for itself a kingdom. The kingdom of God is therefore organic; it is a living thing, not artificial and mechanical. That is to say, it is built up, not from without, but from within; it is not a governmental device, but a family-kingdom, with all which that involves. This truth is one of great importance for an adequate understanding of the kingdom of God, and will save us from many theological pitfalls.

Relations within the kingdom of God.—Inasmuch as eternal life is the life of the kingdom, we may justly expect that its various aspects will find expression here. Since these have already been discussed, nothing more is needed with reference to many of them save to indicate their mutual relations.

1. God, the Author and Source of eternal life, is Sovereign in the kingdom of God. He is absolute Sovereign. In him the kingdom, with

all within it, has its being. It is a transcript of his nature, the revelation of himself. But because the kingdom is a family-kingdom, God is Father as well as Sovereign, and has all of a father's love and care for his subjects, who are also sons. When we say that God is absolute Sovereign, therefore, it does not imply that he can act arbitrarily, or in a different way from the wise way he has chosen. God, as a being of ethical perfection, is impelled to the wisest and most beneficent course of action possible in every case; not from outside compulsion, but because he is the God he is.

2. Jesus, the Mediator of Eternal Life, is, by virtue of his position, the Founder of the kingdom of God on earth, and the Vicegerent of God in the kingdom. He is the anointed King, the "Messiah." Jesus made the law of the kingdom his own, and fulfilled it in his life on earth. In so doing he gave the kingdom a place in the world, and around him it has built itself up. He thereby also became its Lawgiver and Ruler. For him to speak is for God to speak, because he has made God's thought and will his own. At the same time, Jesus was so completely identified with human life that he belongs to the human race. He is a part of humanity, the elder Brother of many brethren. The kingdom thus has the advantage of a Ruler

whom it can understand, for he speaks with a human voice; one whom it can trust and obey, for he speaks the thought of God, and with his authority.

3. Those who, by faith in Jesus, have received eternal life are the subjects of the kingdom of God. Not all men are, although God wishes them to be. Those alone are subjects who participate in the eternal spiritual life of the kingdom. Men come into the kingdom of God as they come into eternal life, by a new spiritual birth. Repentance of sin and faith in Christ are therefore the conditions of entrance into the kingdom of God; and this entrance by way of the new birth is accompanied by the forgiveness of sins.

By virtue of the family nature of the kingdom the subjects of God are also the sons of God, and are brethren among themselves; as sons, fellow-subjects, and brethren, they come into social relations that are governed by the law of the kingdom, which we are now prepared to consider.

The law of the kingdom.— There is only one law in the kingdom of God. All former laws are fulfilled in this, and all subsequent ones grow out of it. This law is love. God is love; therefore love is supreme in the kingdom that is the expression of his nature. The law is not

external, but organically and ineradicably bound up in the kingdom itself. It was this law which Jesus made his own and fulfilled in himself, becoming thus by right Lawgiver in the kingdom; and it is now binding upon all who become partakers of divine life, and just because they become partakers. The new life within them is love, and must express itself according to the law of love. Love is the law, therefore, which regulates the community life in the kingdom of God.

Perhaps the law needs no further definition; we know what love is. Christ, however, does not use the word that expresses the love of kinship and of earthly affection, but that which expresses the principle of altruism. Christian love is grounded in admiration, veneration, or good will, rather than in sense and emotion; it is a matter of choice rather than of impulse; and it involves an unselfish, altruistic desire for the well-being of others.

The all-inclusive law of love needs to be adapted to the concrete circumstances of daily living. Jesus himself began this work. Just as white light may be separated by the prism into the many rays that compose it, so Jesus separated this one great commandment "to love" into the various commands that apply directly to existing conditions. Only he always made it plain

that these separate commands must continually be blending again into love, if character is to shine out with the clear Christian light. Aside from the intrinsic value of these special directions given by Jesus is their helpfulness as precedents for future adaptations of a similar kind. The apostles continued the work begun by Christ. Much of the value of their epistles lies just in this specific application of the law of the kingdom to the exigencies that arose as Christianity first came into contact with the secular world. The special conditions that called forth these letters have largely passed away, it is true; but the apostolic decisions help us both directly and indirectly better to understand the gospel and better to express it in concrete laws for present conditions. "Greet one another with a holy kiss," is a local commandment. But it helps us to realize more fully that the law of love does not permit Christian brethren to pass each other by with scant courtesy and averted looks.

How the law of the kingdom is fulfilled.—This law of the kingdom, the law of love, is to be fulfilled in all the relationships of the kingdom. It is to be fulfilled toward God by unanxious trust in him as the strong and wise and loving Father; in the consciousness that he, on his part, fulfils the law toward men by caring for them. Christians are to go about

their tasks as laborers together with God, making his will theirs, and choosing his purposes as ends that shall dominate and give meaning to all their work. So choosing, and so living, they are to work from day to day easily, without friction and without worry. Such an attitude toward God gives men right views of life, and lets them understand it in its true proportions. No human cure for restlessness can begin to compare with this clear view of the most important things in life and this calm trust in the heavenly Father. The law of love is not fulfilled toward him till his children thus trust him. If an earthly father can never be satisfied unless his child has confidence in him, much less can the heavenly Father, who wants men's loving trust above all things else in the universe. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Perfect love casts out fear and brings in trust.

Christ has fulfilled the law of love toward us by the vicarious bearing of our griefs and sins, even unto death. He continues to fulfil it by still offering his companionship and comfort, guidance and strength. On our part this law is to be fulfilled toward Christ by sincere faith and loving service, with all which these involve of confidence, trust, and obedience. "If ye love me, ye will keep my command-

ments." But he does not require the service of slaves. He calls us no more servants, but friends. Hence the fulfilment of the law of love toward him involves an obedience that is rendered in the spirit of joyful and willing loyalty, not of fear. He is our companion and friend, to walk with us through the dark and hard places of life, as well as along the easy paths: "Lo, I am with you alway." Christian service can thus never degenerate into the perfunctory performance of duty. It is always glorified by love. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

The law of love is to be fulfilled among the fraternal subjects of the kingdom by mutual burden-bearing. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," says the apostle. The only way love has of truly expressing itself is by burden-bearing. That was why Christ entered the life of humanity. God might have declared his love forever from the heavens, and the world would not have believed it, and would have given no heed. Christ proved his love, and God's, by becoming the world's burden-bearer, and himself fulfilling the law of the kingdom in that way. So also must the subjects fulfil the law of Christ. The judgment scene in

the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew here finds its significance, and does not need any far-fetched interpretation to satisfy theological exigencies. Men are judged by their deeds of helpfulness, because these deeds are the only real proof that they are dominated by the law of the kingdom. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The kingdom also comes into relations with the outside world. The same law is to govern its subjects there, even though it is not reciprocated, but is met by the law of the world. God does not confine his love and care to the subjects of the kingdom. He makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends his rain alike upon the just and the unjust. He loves the world. He commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Jesus came, not to the righteous, but to sinners; the sick are the ones who need the physician. If God and Christ thus show their love outside the kingdom, so must the subjects also. The lawgiver of the kingdom himself says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven. If ye love them which love you, and salute your brethren only, what do ye more than the publicans?"

It is in this way that the nature and worth of the kingdom are to be impressed upon those who are without. As it was first established by Jesus in deeds, so is it to be propagated. There is no salvation divorced from love; and here also it remains true that the only proof of love is in burden-bearing. If Christians are to help men, they must suffer with them and for them. Protestations will never do it. Preaching alone will not do it. Jesus showed his love by deeds of mercy. Having thus proved it to men, he saved them by it. The church must awaken to this fact, if it is to impress the truth of the kingdom upon the world and bring men within its own realm. It will reach "the masses" when it goes about it in Jesus' way, and not till then.

The subjects of the kingdom are to fulfil its law in their relations with the outside world, further, by uncompromising hostility to sin. Sin is humanity's greatest enemy. He who loves humanity most will fight sin hardest. He will fight it in himself and in others—wherever it shows its head. A man cannot be a loyal member of the kingdom of God, having the mind of Christ, dominated by love, and not take Christ's attitude of deadly conflict with sin.

Again, the subjects of the kingdom are to fulfil its law by taking their place in the world's

life and faithfully performing their obligations there. When a man enters the kingdom of God he does not thereby cease to belong to the kingdom of humanity. Humanity also is an organism, and each man is a component part. There are still the human relations of family and industrial and civic life to be fulfilled. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," says the apostle to the subjects of the kingdom who would repudiate their larger human duties. If the church had remembered this truth its history would not have been so marked by outrage to common human nature. Neither should it now withdraw from the world and leave it to the devil. In the world of human life the conflict is to be waged and the kingdom's conquest won.

The progress and consummation of the kingdom. —The considerations just adduced lead directly to the last topic to be discussed—the consummation of the kingdom of God; together with that which is intimately connected with, and results directly in, this final consummation, namely, the future progress of the kingdom. These two are inseparable parts of one movement. In order to see its significance let us look again, and a little more closely, at the relation existing between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. The kingdom of the world, or

of humanity, is organic. No man is isolated, or can be. All men are bound together, not in artificial or mechanical union, to be broken at will, but by the common human life that has found expression in an organic community of all humanity. This old Scripture idea is receiving an entirely new emphasis today through scientific sociology. But the kingdom of God also is an organism, its members being vitally related by means of the new divine life that they have received, and which has expressed itself in the community of the kingdom. Yet the members of this kingdom are also members of the kingdom of the world, thus constituting an organism within an organism.

Herein is disclosed the cause of the social ferment and the significance of the future course of the kingdom of God upon earth. However it came about, the kingdom of humanity has become the kingdom of the world, in which the supreme law is the law of selfishness, each man seeking his own isolated good, swayed by earthly passions, aiming at worldly gains, circumscribed by sensuous surroundings. Persistent strife for personal and selfish interests characterizes the world's life. We will freely and gladly admit that this law does not have free course, and that there are many instances in which the divine constitution of humanity asserts its latent power

and breaks the law of selfishness. It still remains true, however, that this law is the dominating one in the kingdom of the world. It is within this kingdom, and as a constituent part of it, because claiming its subjects while not detaching them, that the kingdom of God is organized, not only with new aims and a law of its own, but with aims and a law diametrically and eternally opposed to those of the world. The world-conflict is begun—a conflict inherent, inevitable, and to the death.

It is easy to see this struggle between the laws of the two kingdoms in the individual, but it is also worth our while to understand the nature of the movement as a world-conflict of social forces. The peculiar character of this conflict lies in the fact that the same men are members of both organisms, and the law of each claims dominion over them. When a man has once come into the kingdom of God, has seen the beauty of the King, and has felt the power of love, this new life becomes the most cherished treasure of his soul, and by its own vital force asserts its dominion. At the same time this man, as subject also in the kingdom of the world, must take his place in the world and do his work in society. But inasmuch as the law of society still remains the law of the world, which is firmly intrenched in industrial and social institutions, when the sub-

jects of the kingdom of God come into this complex social life, of which they are still an organic part, they come perforce into conflict with the laws of the kingdom of the world. They must either act according to the old social laws, and outrage their conscience, or else stand by their conscience and commit social and industrial suicide; or, as is probably the case with the majority, adopt the laws of the world, and strive to still their conscience by attempting to mitigate the more glaring evils of worldliness, and color them a little with the halo of the heavenly kingdom's love.

Nothing at the present day so hinders the progress of the kingdom of God as this persistence of the old law of the world in social institutions. And the time is coming when it must give way. Eventually Christians must either withdraw from the world or conquer it wholly. No one who comprehends at all the nature and power of Christianity will doubt which is to be. When the new kingdom began on earth, it found the law of the kingdom of the world dominant. It could not be expected to overthrow this at once; the leaven must have time to spread. It did make the attempt, however, within three hundred years, when the Catholic church, as an earthly organization of the kingdom of God, entered into conflict with the kingdom of the world. But

this was done under a misconception of the inner nature of the contest. The church adopted, first the weapons, and then the law, of the world, and ended by itself becoming a worldly kingdom fighting for supremacy among other worldly kingdoms. The true kingdom of God had not yet gained strength enough to change the old constitution of society.

But this kingdom has been quietly growing through the centuries. Its nature is becoming ever more clearly understood in the midst of God's historical discipline, and its real power is felt today over a wider range of life than ever before. Perhaps the time has not yet come when the new kingdom can overthrow the old, drive the law of selfishness out of social institutions, and incorporate the new law of love. But that day is approaching, and will surely come. Just how soon it will come depends, not upon God, for he has always been doing his utmost to bring it to pass, but upon the fidelity of the children of the kingdom to its principles, and upon the courage and wisdom with which they conduct the warfare against the kingdom of the world. The conflict will not cease until the kingdom of God triumphs. Already the expansive power of the gospel has occasioned great social upheavals and overturnings. It is destined to work yet greater revolutions. For this struggle is the meaning of the

world's history, and is shaping its course. Sometimes quiescent beneath the surface, recuperating the exhausted forces, ever and again breaking out in fierce open battle at the world's historical crises, still the mighty combat wages and yet shall wage. This is the coming world-struggle, this fight of the kingdom of God to dominate the institutional life of mankind. The kingdom already is gaining strength for victory. As surely as it is the right kingdom for humanity, and contains its highest good—and that is as sure as that God, whose nature the kingdom expresses, is right—just so surely there must come a radical transformation of society, in which the law of this kingdom shall supplant the law of the kingdom of the world. Then shall be fulfilled the divine ideal of the future which was the hope of the Hebrew prophets, even when the powers of the world were strongest; then shall be realized the divine vision of John the apostle, when, exiled by the kingdom of the world, he looked into the future and saw the day when that kingdom—not "kingdoms"—had become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; then shall be reached that consummation which has been the dream of prophets and seers in all ages,

> "That one far-off divine event
> Toward which the whole creation moves."[1]

[1] It is well to call attention again to the fact that this triumph of Christianity is the sublime assumption of the gospel itself, and

This will be the triumph of the Son of man, when he shall come in glory. The kingdom that he founded in lowliness and apparent defeat, but with sublime faith in its ultimate success, will have vindicated its divine power and its Founder's true perception of the deepest needs of humanity. What more there will be in the coming of the Son of man we do not know. It seems probable that he will come in this final triumph, as he has in former partial triumphs, by way of some great social upheaval, which will constitute the ultimate crisis of history and mark the death throes of the kingdom of the world. But it is hardly worth while to attempt to rend the veil of the future that we may see the circumstances accompanying the end. The language of Scripture is figurative and vague with reference to everything except the fact itself. And nothing else is of serious importance. In view, however, of the commentary of the past eighteen hundred years, it is fairly certain that this result will be accomplished as a part of the historical process itself, and not by some spectacular event wholly outside of organic connection with the previous development of the kingdom. The day of the *deus ex machina* is past.

that no attempt is here made to prove it. See Introduction, pp. xxiv–xxvi. The only thing attempted here is to point out the character of the conflict and the direction which it will take. An adequate treatment of the subject would of course require a much fuller discussion than can be entered into in this outline.

Such is the future of the kingdom; but how about its consummation? Properly speaking, there is no consummation. It is an everlasting kingdom; of it there shall be no end. This triumph of the kingdom marks, however, the consummation of the age—the age in which it was founded, and which is characterized by the dominance of the kingdom of the world and the new kingdom's growing strength. What will come after this age we know only inferentially. Just as with the individual the very process of living the new life brings its own intrinsic reward in the form of Christlike character and richer life, so also with the kingdom will the next age be the logical and necessary outcome of its own nature as manifested in the course of its development. The desire of the human mind for definiteness here, for the compassing of the end, will not be satisfied; for there is no end. We have left the realm of finite time, and passed beyond the limits of finite thought, out into the eternities of God which conceal the beginning and the end from our most searching gaze. It is well so. In this the divinity of the kingdom again manifests itself. Its last message, from as far into the future as the human mind can reach, is that the highest good of man is not a fixed state, but still a growth and a becoming.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.

LOOKING back now at the whole process which we have tried to describe, and the conclusions reached, it is hoped that the significance of the matter set forth is plain. The author of this volume certainly does not make any claim to the original discovery of the nature of the movement that has been going on, or to an exclusive appreciation of its meaning, although he has nowhere seen it described in the systematic form here given it.[1] Detached perceptions of it appear here and there, and the ideas are fast making their way as a part of intelligent Christian thinking everywhere. Indeed, it is surprising how rapidly the conditions of religious thought are changing, and from how many different sources come words which show that men are dealing with the problem discussed in the foregoing

[1] Since writing these words the author has read Harnack's great work, in which the historical aspects of the subject here treated are so clearly brought out. While Harnack does not directly discuss the question either of the recovery or the restatement of the gospel, yet his views concerning both are very evident. Harnack's later lectures, "What is Christianity?" come nearer the core of the matter.

pages. An attempt has here been made to bring these current ideas into definite expression and give to the subject the importance that it deserves.

The significance of the matter for the theological world is of such far-reaching import that without exaggeration it may be compared to the revolution wrought by Kant in philosophy, and by Copernicus in astronomy.[1] It will be interesting to recall Kant's words:

> In metaphysical speculations it has always been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects; but every attempt from this point of view to extend our knowledge of objects *a priori* by means of conceptions has ended in failure. The time has now come to ask whether better progress may not be made by supposing that objects must conform to our knowledge. . . . . Our suggestion is similar to that of Copernicus in astronomy, who, finding it impossible to explain the movements of the heavenly bodies on the supposition that they turned round the spectator, tried whether he might not succeed better by supposing the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest. Let us make a similar experiment in metaphysics with *perception*.

The revolution now going on in theology is like these in astronomy and philosophy in that it radically changes the center of things in the science affected. Ever since the inception of

[1] It is hardly necessary to state that the author does not mean that the importance of his own production is to be compared to the work of Kant and Copernicus; the reference is to the change in thought just referred to as becoming so common.

theology the gospel has been made to revolve about philosophy. Or, at the very best, philosophy has constituted an independent center coordinate with the gospel, and the two have revolved about each other. Sometimes, as at the first, this philosophy has come from outside sources; at other times it has been found within authorized Christianity, in the theology that had itself become a speculative system. From the days of the origin of theology, when the historical Jesus was displaced by the philosophical Logos, and the heavenly Father was transformed into a metaphysical idea, up to the present time, the philosophical domination has continued in Christianity. Each generation has taken up the process where the preceding generation left off, and has added theological cycle to epicycle in the hope of reconciling the new knowledge with the old system. But the discrepancies have finally become so pronounced as to make it evident that the trouble is not one of accidental aberrations, but that something is fundamentally wrong in the system itself. Theology, according to the old method, has often proved a failure. Instead of leading the life of the church, it has lagged behind and become a burden. Its whole course is marked by arid stretches of acrimonious intellectualism that have misrepresented the gospel of Jesus and weakened its power.

The time has now come when it is worth while to see whether better success may not be achieved by a change of center; and, instead of supposing the gospel to revolve about philosophical dogmas, to make these revolve about the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Each generation, instead of starting with the theological conclusions of a former time, will thus be sent back for itself to the gospel of Jesus, and will state this gospel *de novo* as often as changing conditions make it advisable to do so. Superficial theological makeshifts will disappear, along with the false system which made them necessary, and that real harmony will be brought to light which always manifests itself when the true center is found.

In every department of knowledge this emergence of harmony is the strongest proof that the right theory has been discovered; the phenomena are satisfactorily explained. The best evidence that a certain key is the right one is that it turns the bolt of the lock. The best and only proof that the right key has been discovered for the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics is that they make sense when interpreted by it. The demonstration of the truth of the Copernican system is that it reveals harmonious order in the movements of the heavenly bodies. In like manner, the best proof that the new theological center here contended for is the true one lies in the

fact that this theory satisfactorily explains the phenomena of the religious and theological world and reduces them to harmony. It does this both in the historical and in the practical realms.

Historically, it accounts for the course taken by Christianity, and especially by Christian dogmatics, throughout its development, as well as for the condition of things existing at the present time in the religious world. By it is made clear the real nature of the gospel, and of theology, and the legitimate relations of the two. The early powerful influence of the gospel before the theological process began is explained. We understand also why it took so strong a hold upon the thinking of the second and immediately succeeding centuries, as it transformed itself into a welcome philosophy of salvation, founded upon divine revelation. We see how, along with the dogmatic system, there grew up the congenial institution of the Catholic church, which divided with it the allegiance of men, and how these two, the church and theology, became the disciplinary forces during the long period of the development of the Germanic peoples. But we perceive also at what fatal cost this conquest was made; how the transformation of the Christian faith into a semi-pagan philosophy, and the conversion of the Spirit-filled church into a worldly

institution, resulted in a disastrous depotentialization of Christianity, and changed its essential nature. It is easy to understand, therefore, why the conversion of the world to this kind of a religion should leave Christian society half pagan and produce such deep-seated and widespread misconception of what it means to be a Christian.

The whole condition of things in the modern world also is explained by this view. The rediscovery of the gospel in the reopened Bible led to the great practical Reformation of the sixteenth century, when the new reality-seeking spirit began to make itself felt in religion. It failed to do more, at first, than reform the glaring abuses of the church and reassert the principle of salvation by faith in Jesus, as set forth in the New Testament. The old dogmatic entanglements remained, and theology quickly acquired increased importance when it was left to monopolize the attention hitherto shared with the church. Even then trouble might not have arisen if the knowledge emphasized had been contemporary knowledge. But it was that of the Greek and Roman world. Meanwhile the modern spirit had created a new knowledge, built up by the new scientific method, and had made the ancient culture obsolete. During the Middle Ages, theology had maintained its hold by perpetuating the ancient culture with

which it was bound up, accomplishing this especially through the Aristotelian philosophy and the Ptolemaic cosmology. Then suddenly the whole ancient structure sank out of sight. Yet the Protestant theology insisted upon clinging to it and trying to bring it back to a place in the modern world. The result is theological confusion and controversy, in which is being waged the last conflict between two civilizations and two bodies of culture.

Meanwhile two hundred years before the open Bible had produced an evangelical movement according to the spirit of the gospel, which expressed itself in practical missionary activity at home and abroad, but without any adequate theological leadership. Along with this movement, although independent of it, there arose a scientific study of the Scriptures that has produced a new biblical knowledge. It has now been discovered that the theological system which has been claiming sanctity is not to be found in the Bible at all. Meanwhile the new science of church history comes in and tells us where this theology came from: that it attached itself to the gospel during the progress of the centuries, and has nothing divine about it except the halo cast over it by the gospel which it professes to set forth. Here is disclosed the condition of things that has divorced theology from the life of the church and

given rise to the movements and parties of the modern religious world. But in the midst of all the currents and countercurrents, we see ever more clearly the advance of the main stream of progress — a stream gaining in definiteness and volume every day, drawing the lesser currents into itself in increasing numbers, and moving forward with resistless, because divine, force toward a great theological reformation which shall overthrow the first and oldest heresy that changed the gospel of salvation into a system of metaphysical philosophy, and which shall set Christianity free to leave the culture of the ancient world behind it and enter untrammeled into modern life on a new career of conquest. All of this historical process of Christianity becomes plain as we stand at the new center and look out upon it.

Practically, the theological theory here advocated commends itself by putting its adherents into closer touch with God and with humanity. Returning the gospel to its rightful jurisdiction over the conscience and the will, instead of making it chiefly a matter of the intellect, it brings theology back from the clouds of scholastic speculation into a living world. It sends a man with new determination to the Bible, to learn more of Jesus and his divine way of salvation. It urges him to

a new study of history in the hope of a clearer understanding of Christian truth through its manifestation in the historical development. It puts him into sympathy with present-day life in all of its aspects, and impels him to seek a better understanding of social conditions and needs, because the world is God's and the object of his redemptive work. Thus touching a living God and a present world, and seeking to give a new incarnation to the divine Spirit of Jesus, men are forced forward by an irresistible impulse to bring the world to God. The proverbial influence of theology, at least ever since those first days when it had vital meaning, has been to remove its votaries from the world of affairs. Here is a theology that will give a man no rest until it has sent him forth to the age in which he lives with Jesus' message of salvation. Theology becomes a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

In this theology the modern spirit is given an opportunity in religion such as it has enjoyed in other realms, to turn away from the traditional and hypothetical back to real conditions and vital issues. Religious reality is here set forth. We see again the age-long struggle between sin and righteousness, centering about Him to whom we are ever forced to look as the one who alone can lead the way to victory. Salvation is again a real deliverance from sin, not some judicial or meta-

physical fiction. The living Father, the personal Saviour, the ever-present Spirit are restored to the position assigned them in the New Testament, but so long usurped by a metaphysical Trinity and a speculative Christology, The return of theology to religious reality and to the accomplishment of its mission in the world, which results from the adoption of the view advocated, is a strong proof that the right theory has been found.

We need have no expectation that this new theological adjustment will save the world. No theology can do that. The tendency of human nature to sin will still remain. The forces of evil will not have abated their determined activity. But it will be something, it will be much, to have removed the artificial hindrances to the spread of Christianity, and again leave the divine gospel unfettered to accomplish its mission in the world.

The gospel of Jesus, as expressed in the New Testament, and especially in the evangelical narratives, is the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and constitutes the permanent Christian message, set forth in living terms that every generation can understand. It will be the lasting glory of the nineteenth century that it led religious thought back up the tortuous channel of ecclesiastical history to the clear perennial springs of Christian truth in the New Testament

sources, and thus brought about the recovery of this gospel. Is it too much to expect that this task has been done once for all, and that the New Testament gospel may now remain the inalienable heritage of men in all ages? It certainly is to be hoped that every generation will maintain the hard-won right to stand before the open Bible and read there the gospel message for itself, in all of the purity and power with which it came from the sacred lips of Him who gave it to the world at the cost of such infinite sacrifice. Then let each age do for itself what the first centuries did: so express this universal gospel in terms of contemporary thought and institutional life that it shall exercise its maximum influence upon the men of that age, and bring to them in greatest fulness the blessings of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

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